

November  
2006

# ANIMATION<sup>TM</sup>

## MAGAZINE



**Plympton's  
Hair High:  
A Blast from  
the Past**

**The Toons  
That Ate  
MIPCOM**

**DreamWorks  
& Aardman**  
Win the CG Rat Race with  
**Flushed Away**

\$5.95 U.S. \$7.95 CAN



[www.animationmagazine.net](http://www.animationmagazine.net)



# Ruby Gloom

happiest girl in the world

For more information please visit  
us at **MIP Booth #L5.01**,  
October 9-13th



Mighty Fine



Ruby Gloom™ Mighty Fine, YTV is a trademark of Corus Entertainment Inc. NELVANA is a trademark of Nelvana Limited. CORUS is a trademark of Corus Entertainment Inc. All rights reserved.



# DISCOVER THE TRUTH ABOUT HUMANS

[www.anima.fi/hbn](http://www.anima.fi/hbn)



3D ANIMATION - 26 x 13 min

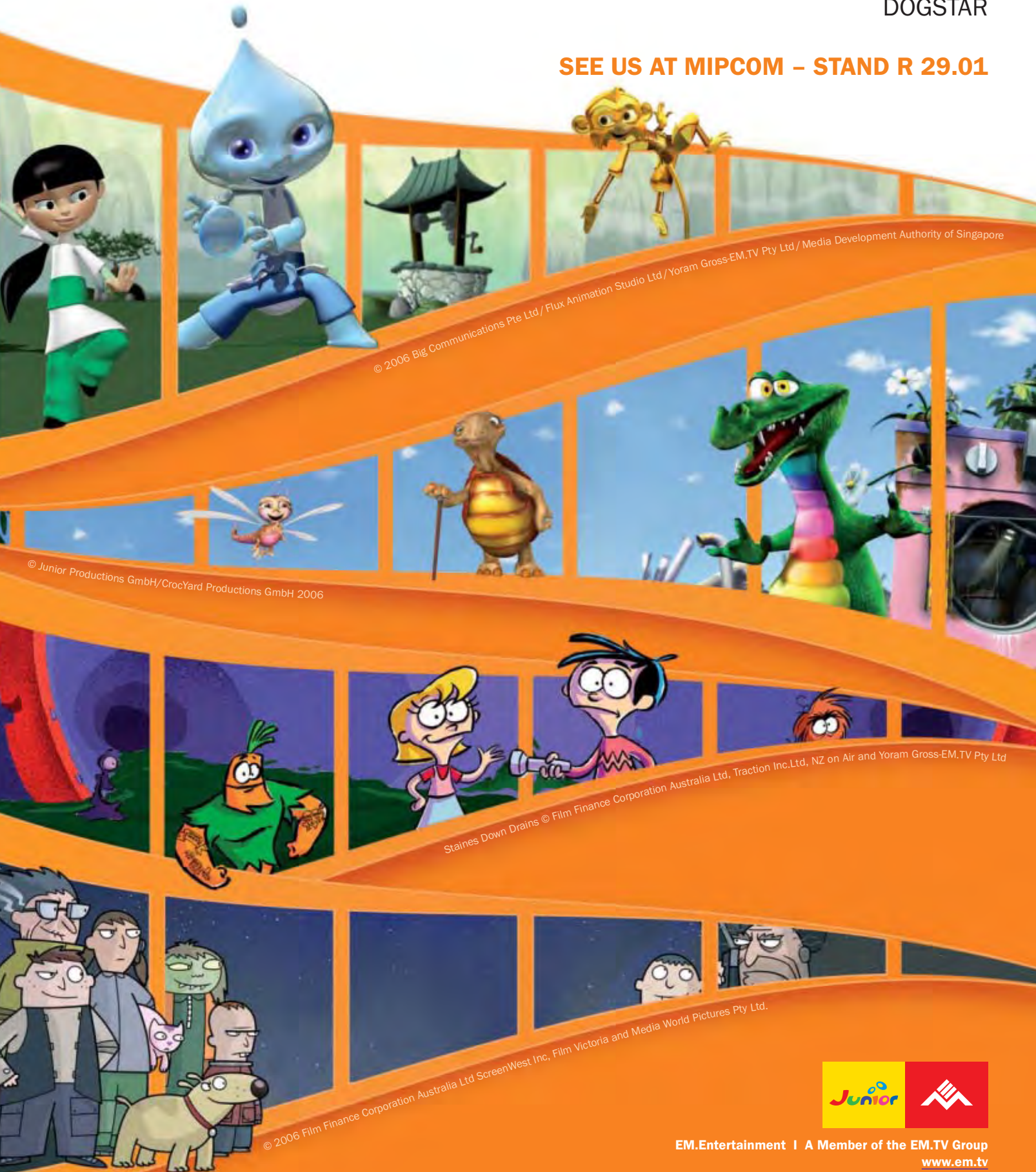
**CONTACT: Producer Petteri Pasanen, Cell: +358 207 749 815**  
Anima Vitae Ltd, Helsinki, Finland, [petteri.pasanen@anima.fi](mailto:petteri.pasanen@anima.fi), [www.anima.fi](http://www.anima.fi)





**IN PRODUCTION** MASTER RAINDROP  
CROCO LOCO  
STAINES DOWN DRAINS  
DOGSTAR

**SEE US AT MIPCOM – STAND R 29.01**



© 2006 Big Communications Pte Ltd / Flux Animation Studio Ltd / Yoram Gross-EM.TV Pty Ltd / Media Development Authority of Singapore

© Junior Productions GmbH/CrocYard Productions GmbH 2006

Staines Down Drains © Film Finance Corporation Australia Ltd, Traction Inc.Ltd, NZ on Air and Yoram Gross-EM.TV Pty Ltd

© 2006 Film Finance Corporation Australia Ltd ScreenWest Inc, Film Victoria and Media World Pictures Pty Ltd.



EM.Entertainment | A Member of the EM.TV Group  
[www.em.tv](http://www.em.tv)



78 X 13'



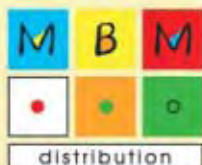
# Pet Pals.

# 3

STAND ITALIA  
R36.17



VISIT M.B.M. AT MIPCOM



DISTRIBUTED BY: M.B.M. ASSOCIATI

[WWW.ALCUNI.IT](http://WWW.ALCUNI.IT) - [SALES.DEPARTMENT@ALCUNI.IT](mailto:SALES.DEPARTMENT@ALCUNI.IT)





# Skunk fu!

52x13'

Cute Animals... Killer Kung Fu!



**Coming Soon  
on CBBC**

**LR4.15**

The UK Indies Pavilion stand LR4.15  
is located in The Lerins Hall.



**For all sales inquiries:**

**[info@cakeentertainment.com](mailto:info@cakeentertainment.com) or call +44 (0)207 4949 104**

**Contact during Mipcom:**

**Genevieve Dexter + 44 (0)7711 419 412**





## 6 Frame-by-Frame

Monthly Animation Planner ... Books We Love ... Remembering Hanna-Barbera artist Ed Benedict ... New *Astro Boy* and *Mr. Peabody & Sherman* features.

## 12 Gaming

**12 Full Moon Fever.** Konami and Production I.G sink their teeth into *Lunar Knights* for DS. [by Ryan Ball] **13 The Rush is On.** *Gish* creator Edmund McMillen talks about his new Flash game, *Blast Miner*. [by Ryan Ball]

## 14 Features

**14 Rat-o-Rooter.** Aardman's distinctive stop-motion style animation and DreamWorks' CG prowess get swirled together in *Flushed Away*. [by Ramin Zahed] **18 Hairy Scary.** Bill Plympton's *Hair High* sees the light of cinemas. [by Ryan Ball] **20 Eye-popping Nightmare.** ILM's digital tricks make for a

heck of a treat in *The Nightmare Before Christmas 3D*. [by Ryan Ball]

## 20 Home Entertainment

**22 Built for the Future** Previewing Kenji Kamiyama's *Ghost in the Shell: Stand Alone Complex Solid State Society*. [by Patrick Drazen] **23 Disc Picks.** This month's hottest animated DVD releases. **24 Hints from Eloise.** The kid lit favorite comes to life in two new Film Roman specials. [by Evelyn Jacobson] **25 Back Under the Sea for DVD.** Filmmakers Ron Clements and John Musker discuss re-mastering *The Little Mermaid*. [by Jake Friedman] **26 The Samurai Critic.** The wise one reviews Miyazaki's *The Castle of Cagliostro* on DVD. [by Charles Solomon]

## 28 Television

**28 MIPCOM Special Secion.** All the highlights, news and viewpoints you need to survive the TV market in Cannes. **38 Spectra's Hat Trick.** Montreal studio brings *Toopy and Binoo*, *Fred's Head* and *Amos Daragon*. **40 Euro Co-Pros.** A producer offers his take on the ins and outs. [by Carlos Bien] **42 Vanishing Artists?** Our ace reporter uncovers the story behind the boards. [by Chris Grove] **44 Calling in The Replacements.** Kids get a family overhaul in Disney Channel's new series. **46 The Need for Features.** Indies seek long-form toons at MIPCOM. [by Thomas J. McLean] **48 The Padded Cel.** MIPCOM Myths Debunked. [by Robby London] **50 Reaching the Summit.** Toon shop Six Point Harness climbs to success. **52 Horsing Around.** DIC's *Horseland* enters the fall TV race. **54 Dragon Tales.** Weta returns to Medieval times for Nelvana's *Jane and the Dragon*.

## 56 Licensing

**56 Wheel, Deals and Dolls.** The latest licensing news about toon-related properties, plus best-selling toys and DVD charts. [by Ramin Zahed]

## 54 VFX

**58 Tech Reviews.** Autodesk Maya 8.0; wondertouch Pro Emitters for particleillusion 3.0; NVIDIA's Quadro FX 5500. [by Todd Sheridan Perry] **62 Fountain Head.** Practical and digital vfx run deep in Darren Aronofsky's *The Fountain*. [by Ron Magid] **68 Battle Stations.** Vancouver's Atmosphere keeps the CG thrills coming in *Battlestar Galactica*. [by Barbara Robertson]

## 66 Opportunities

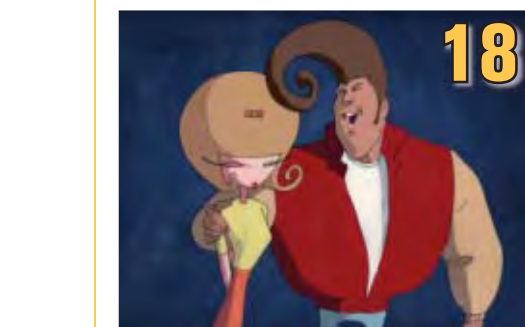
**72 Opportunities.** Pros mentor animation students online through Acme. [by Ellen Wolf] **76 Medical Incredible.** New York's BioDigital Systems unlocks the healing power of CG. [by Evelyn Jacobson] **78 3-D Pete.**

**84 A Day in the Life.** New York-based Animation Collective.

## On the Cover:

DreamWorks/Aardman' latest visual centerpiece, *Flushed Away*, hits theaters next month.

MIPCOM Cover: Buena Vista International's *My Friends Tigger & Pooh* arrives at the MIPCOM market this year.





**F**or die-hard toon aficionados, the 30th Anniversary Edition of the Ottawa International Animation Festival was one of the most anticipated animation events of the year. Thanks to the hard work of managing director Kelly Neall and artistic director Chris Robinson, the mid-September event was a joyous mix of looking back at the great works of the past—Bob Clampett, Bruno Bozzetto and Konstantin Bronzit retrospectives—and a dizzying collection of inspiring shorts programs. Attending electric toon events like Ottawa are a great antidote for those who might be disillusioned with the more commercial aspects of the business. You just can't help but be charged with energy and optimism once you witness the dazzling array of talent and passion on display at the festival.

For the past three years, the Ottawa festival has also been accompanied by a well-run Television Animation Conference. Under the direction of Maral Mohammadian, the two-day confab offers a wonderful opportunity to dive into the trends, topics and technologies that are affecting the industry. It's also



a fun place to meet and greet the execs and creative teams behind the best toons du jour. This September, Cartoon Network's senior VP of programming and development Michael Ouweleen kicked off the event with a killer keynote about the evolution of media and the dominance of the niche markets in today's high-tech climate. He admitted to having a sense of déjà vu when he attends meetings where everyone talks about the new digital platforms and Chris Anderson's *Long Tail*

theories. (For those still unfamiliar with Anderson's theories, he believes that in the near future the proliferation of choices on niche platforms will destroy the possibility of having mega-blockbusters. (The theory might be a bit hard to digest since seven of the highest-grossing movies of all time have been released *after 2000!*)

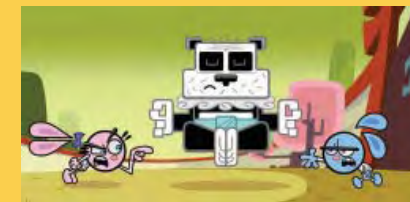
However, the funny and insightful Ouweleen was happy to point out that the people working in traditional media (that's TV to you and me) shouldn't be afraid of this new trend. He pointed to the fact that his popular show, *Harvey Birdman: Attorney at Law* owes its success to this business of "Serious Niche-Ness" (he might have coined that term). "Everyone's talking about these developments as if it's a revolution, but it's only an evolution," he added. "TV is not dead: It hasn't been more alive. It's just that 'safe' is not an option anymore!"

As many of the panelists at the conference pointed out, it's a strange and wonderful time to be living, creating and watching animated content. Our world is changing faster than any of us would like to admit, even without *Jetsons*-era jetpacks and flying cars. What really matters is that creativity and risk-taking toons are even more prized than ever before.

Ramin Zahed  
Editor-in-Chief  
rzahed@animationmagazine.net

## Quote of the Month

"A frog sits on a toilet and burps early in *Yin Yang Yo!*, and that pretty much sums up this new Toon Disney series, which has its debut today ... The worst thing about [the show's] thunderous cleverness is that it might make *Curious George* look dull."



—Susan Stewart, in her *New York Times* review of the new Toon Disney/Jetix show *Yin Yang Yo!*.

## ANIMATION MAGAZINE

November 2006

Vol. 20, Issue 11, No. 166

[Info@animationmagazine.net](mailto:Info@animationmagazine.net)

**President** Jean Thoren

**Publisher** Jodi Bluth

**Accounting** Jan Bayouth

**Webmaster** Eric Brandenburg

**EDITORIAL** [Edit@animationmagazine.net](mailto:Edit@animationmagazine.net)

**Editor-in-Chief** Ramin Zahed

**Web and Gaming Editor** Ryan Ball

**Contributing Editors** Chris Grove, Ron Magid,  
Barbara Robertson

**Editorial Assistant** Claire Webb

**Copy Editor** Roberta Street

**Animation Art Advisor** Ron Barbagallo

**Digital Reviews Editor** Todd Sheridan Perry

**Contributors** Patrick Drazen, Mike Fisher,  
Jake Friedman, Evelyn Jacobson, Robby London,  
Michael Mallory, Thomas J. McLean,  
Mercedes Milligan, Charles Solomon, Ellen Wolff

## ADVERTISING SALES

[Sales@animationmagazine.net](mailto:Sales@animationmagazine.net)

Sheri Shelton

**PRODUCTION** [Prod@animationmagazine.net](mailto:Prod@animationmagazine.net)

**Art and Production Director** Susanne Rector

**CIRCULATION** [Circ@animationmagazine.net](mailto:Circ@animationmagazine.net)

**Circulation Director** Jan Bayouth

## TO ADVERTISE:

Phone: 818-991-2884

Fax: 818-991-3773

Email: [Sales@animationmagazine.net](mailto:Sales@animationmagazine.net)

Website: [www.animationmagazine.net](http://www.animationmagazine.net)

## List Rental

Quantum List Marketing

480-860-6036

ANIMATION MAGAZINE

(USPS 015-877/ISSN 1041-617X)

## Published monthly by:

Animation Magazine

30941 West Agoura Road, Suite 102

Westlake Village, CA 91361

Periodicals postage paid at Thousand Oaks Post Office, CA,  
and additional mailing offices.

## POSTMASTER:

SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO:

ANIMATION MAGAZINE

30941 West Agoura Road, Suite 102

Westlake Village, CA 91361

## TO SUBSCRIBE:

For the U.S., the rate is \$50 for 12 issues or \$85 for 24 issues. Rates for Canada and Mexico are US\$65 for 12 issues or US\$110 for 24 issues delivered by foreign airmail. Foreign rates are US\$80 for 12 issues or US\$136 for 24 issues delivered by foreign airmail. Please allow six to eight weeks for initial delivery. Also available in a digital version for \$36 for 12 issues or \$60 for 24 issues.

Animation Magazine

© 2006 Animation Magazine

Prior written approval must be obtained to duplicate any and all contents. The copyrights and trademarks of images featured herein are the property of their respective owners. Animation Magazine acknowledges the creators and copyright holders of the materials mentioned herein, and does not seek to infringe on those rights. Printed in the U.S.A.



Mail to notemart@gmail.com for more...  
**Come See Us at our MIPCOM Booth N° 17.01!**

# HORSELAND



**Europe / Canada:**  
**Leslie Nelson**  
**T: 331.45.74.30.50**  
**lnelson@dicent.com**

**Rest of the World:**  
**Dan Waite**  
**T: 818.955.5663**  
**dwaite@dicent.com**

**International Home Entertainment:**  
**Clive Jordan**  
**T: +44.20.8699.9738**  
**cjordan@dicent.com**

[www.dicentertainment.com](http://www.dicentertainment.com)



# The Animation Planner

## November

**1-5** The 4th Annual Intl. Student Film Festival rocks North Hollywood, Calif. ([www.isffhollywood.org](http://www.isffhollywood.org)) If you want to go Dutch, then you might want to try the eventful Holland Animation Film Festival ([www.haff.nl](http://www.haff.nl)).



**3** The much-anticipated Aardman/DreamWorks CG-animated feature *Flushed Away* arrives in theaters today. Disney delivers its holiday package early as *The Santa Clause 3: The Escape Clause* opens nationwide.



**4, 5** If you have a few free days and can afford the airfare, why not visit the home of the Hobbits, Wellington, New Zealand, and take in the AnimFXNZ 2006 festival? ([www.positivelywellingtonbusiness.co.nz](http://www.positivelywellingtonbusiness.co.nz)).

**7** Time to break the piggy bank and head for DVD stores: Up for grabs today are Disney/Pixar's *Cars*, *Dungeons & Dragons: The Complete Series*, *Koala Brothers: Outback Christmas*, *Lupin the 3rd: 1-5 Movie Pack* and *Transformers The Movie: 20th Anniversary Special Edition*.



**10-14** London's calling all anime fans—it's time for the International Manga and Anime Competition and Festival ([www.imaf.co.uk](http://www.imaf.co.uk)).



**13-18** The 3rd Istanbul Animation and vfx Short Film competition brings toon players to Turkey ([www.iaistanbul.com](http://www.iaistanbul.com)).

**14** The holiday DVD release season is already upon us. Among the numerous titles you can pick up today are *Chip 'n Dale: Rescue Rangers Vol. 2*; *DuckTales, Vol. 2*; *Gummi Bears: Vol. 1*; *Fullmetal Alchemist The Movie: Conqueror of Shamballa*; *Family Guy: Vol. 4*; *Looney Tunes—Golden Collection 4* and *Bah Humduck! A Looney Tunes Christmas*.



**17** Warner Bros. hopes to do better with its second CG-animated release of the year, the penguin movie known as *Happy Feet*. The penguins are going beak to beak with *Casino Royale*, David Craig's first outing as Bond, James Bond.



**17-19** If you are a die-hard fan of the genre, you may find yourself drawn to the Anime USA 2006 festival in Vienna, Virginia, this week ([www.animeusa.org](http://www.animeusa.org)).



**15-19** Portugal is for animation lovers: Baja hosts the Animatu 06 event for five toon-packed days ([www.festivalanimatu.com](http://www.festivalanimatu.com)).



**21** Home entertainment gods are still smiling at us as we announce the arrival of *Star Trek: The Animated Series, Pokémon—Season 1 Box Set, Invader Zim—Fan Pack, Kong: Return to the Jungle, Ice Age: The Meltdown, Dr. Katz: Professional Therapist Season 2* and *How the Grinch Stole Christmas Deluxe Edition* in stores today.

**22** After several delays (and getting booed at the Venice Film Festival), *The Fountain*, Darren Aronofsky's movie about eternal youth (with Hugh Jackman and Rachel Weisz) opens in theaters.



The Fountain

**23-26** Always wanted to see the sights and sounds of Estonia? Then book that flight to Tallin's Animated Dreams/Black Nights Film Festival ([www.poff.ee/anima](http://www.poff.ee/anima)).

**27-28** The First Vancouver International Game Summit opens its doors to fans this week ([www.rebootconference.com/games2006](http://www.rebootconference.com/games2006)).

**28** Another month, another new *Thundercats* release!! This time, it's *Thundercats: Season 2, Vol. 2* that arrives in DVD stores. Also out today is the *Mobile Suit Gundam Seed: Movie Trilogy Box*.



**29** If and when in Rome, don't forget to take in the sights and sounds of the 11th Castelli Animati Festival ([www.castellianimati.it](http://www.castellianimati.it)).



To get your company's events and products listed in this monthly calendar, please e-mail [cwebb@animationmagazine.net](mailto:cwebb@animationmagazine.net)



## BOOKS WE LOVE

BY RAMIN ZAHED

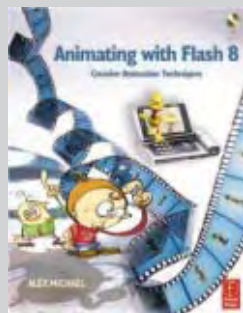
Now that there's a chill in the air, and we're bracing ourselves for daylight savings gloom, it's good to know that there are plenty of animation-related books out there to keep us company this fall.

One of our favorite titles this month is Linda Sunshine's *The Art of Open Season* (Insight Editions, \$45), which is one of the most engaging, visually stimulating books of its kind we've seen in years. Modeled after

the best-selling *Dragonology* series, this 180-plus-page hard-cover offers fans of the Sony Animation movie everything

they could possibly wish to know, see and treasure about it (until the DVD comes out later). Divided into four sections (character design, visual development, production design and story sequences), Sunshine's "field guide" gives us detailed illustrations and eye-popping renderings of all the major characters and backgrounds, layering all the images with informative quotes from the creative team behind the movie. In addition, there are plenty of postcards, stickers and 3D goodies packed inside the book. As cartoonist and creator Steve Moore notes in the intro, "*Open Season* was produced with meticulous care for detail and accuracy and now the entire world knows the truth: Behind our backs, the animals are mooning us!" And if they are, this treasure chest of a book serves as one hell of a memento of that mooning.

If you are looking for a more practical book on today's animation, then it would be smart to pick up Alex Michael's *Animating with Flash 8: Creative Animation Techniques* (Focal Press, \$55.45). Although some toon snobs may turn their nose at Flash technology, there's no denying that Macromedia's tool, which was once created for the Internet, has changed the TV animation landscape today. Michael's primer offers all kinds of tips and useful information about Flash and Flash Lite II, delving into different

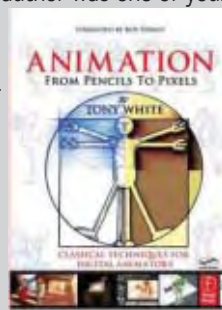


stages of production, from planning to character animation to facial toning and lip synching. He finds time to explore creating 3D animation in 2D environments

and offers insights into titling, pixel fonts and typography, as well as explaining other apps such as Pose and Swift. The book, which comes with a convenient CD-ROM, is a great addition to the growing list of primers on Flash technology, and is bound to come in handy for all those working hard to make this TV-friendly technology, create more sophisticated and better-looking toons in the years ahead.

Tony White's *Animation from Pencils to Pixels: Classical Techniques for the Digital Animator* (Focal Press, \$55.45) is another one of those well-written, smart tomes that makes you wish the author was one of your teachers in school.

Because the book resonates with wisdom that comes with spending years in the trenches of Toon Town, it should be a must-read for anyone who wants to brave the waters of digital animation. White moves from concept to creation through the production pipeline and even touches upon distribution in the info-packed 528 pages of his new book. An animator friend of mine got a special kick out of the CD-ROM that comes with the print volume. Apparently, White takes special care to highlight all kinds of classical, traditionally drawn techniques and even pays a special tribute to great moments in the history of the art form. And, yes, he even includes a comprehensive toon-related terms glossary. Overall, it's a handsome companion to White's earlier primer, *The Animator's Workbook*. With all these helpful books on the market this fall, it's certainly a great time to get back to the drawing board. ■



# A PILLAGING PIG IN SEARCH OF... BEANS?



©2006 Marvela, Inc. All rights reserved.



# In Remembrance

## Ed Benedict (1912-2006)

FRAME-BY-FRAME

I was saddened to hear of Ed Benedict's passing. He nearly made it to 95. The ornery ones tend to do that. Anyone who knew Ed might agree he was a bit of a crusty curmudgeon. Maybe that came from the lack of recognition over the decades for his amazing talents. He had, for many years, been one of the forgotten animation greats from the Golden Age (the infancy of television animation), I'm afraid.

When I was working as a writer on a *Flintstones* book project back in the early '90s, no one at Hanna-Barbera pointed me in the direction of cartoonist Ed Benedict until animator Jordan Reichel visited the studio one day. Jordan was understandably passionate about Ed's work and contribution to the creation of *The Flintstones*, as the show was called in the beginning.

Yet, no one working at the studio—including Bill Hanna or Joe Barbera—gave thought to giving Benedict credit for his amazing design work, the blueprints really, that he laid down for the series. Nothing in the basement files for the show's history or the publicity director's press kits ever recognized this Benedict. There were no signed Ed Benedict sericels back then. "Out of sight, out of mind," Ed concluded to me when I contacted him. He was living a quiet life in Carmel, Calif., far away from Hollywood and the studios, just the way he preferred, but the history books were oddly lacking. It was time to correct that.

I was surprised at how humble a guy Ed Benedict was? He scoffed at the notion that his *Flintstones* designs were genius and dismissed most praise. (Secretly, I think he enjoyed the attention!) He admitted: "I really never thought the *Flintstones* [original sketches] were that good. They gave me no particular thrill. It was my job. I draw. Forget that animation, I like to putter around with designs."



Photo credit: Steve Cox

He was utterly bored with the repetition of the animator's task and much preferred the design aspect. He looked at life in terms of design, circles and lines, and he had that amazing ability—in his peak, anyway—to put down on paper the most aesthetically pleasing combination of all of these.

Benedict, by his estimation, devoted more time and effort to *The Flintstones* than preceding Hanna-Barbera projects. (His original character designs for Wally Gator, Yogi and Boo Boo, Quick Draw McGraw and others

were breathtaking to look at, and the fact that he saved much of his creative output in dusty file cabinets all these years was even more astonishing.)

Aside from designing the cave people and closely conferring with Joe Barbera every step of the way, he gave the show its "rocky" edge and stone-age semblance. From there, the studio ran with his designs. "Joe was smart," said Benedict. "I would have preferred the more crude caveman, but he brought me down to earth. They refined them, making the drawings more commercial. I didn't make the *Flintstones* famous, the studio did."

I took this somewhat irreverent photo of Ed in his den, a room that was smattered with art materials and research books, magazines and such. And screaming out loud in his den was a wall-sized Johnny Carson/*Tonight Show* multicolored curtain which covered the picture window. He was inspired by the *Tonight Show*'s curtain so he and his wife had it made for their home. I'd never seen anything like it in anyone's home. I'd never come across an artist like Ed either. Take a good look at the photo accompanying this feature. Now I ask you: Did Ed design Huck and Quick Draw's bulbous snout after his own? You decide.

—Steve Cox

Steve Cox has written more than a dozen books on film and television. His most recent publication is *The Munsters: A Trip Down Mockingbird Lane* (Back Stage Books).





## Imagi Adopts New Astro Boy

It looks like there's no end in sight for the booming business of turning popular animated TV series into CG-animated features. Just last month, Imagi Animation Studios, which will deliver its *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* movie this March, announced that it has optioned rights to produce a new feature based on Tezuka Production's **Astro Boy**. Imagi's U.S. studio is developing an original story, and its animation facility in Hong Kong will handle physical production for the movie, which the company hopes get into theaters sometime in 2009.



"I grew up with *Astro Boy*, as did many of us at Imagi," says Imagi CEO and vice chairman Francis Kao. "We now have an opportunity to bring our *Astro Boy* dreams to life by combining the power of high-end CG imagery and Imagi's creative collaboration with Tezuka."

Osamu Tezuka first introduced *Astro Boy* to Japanese manga readers in 1951. A black-and-white toon series emerged

in 1963, followed by a color update in 1980. The latest version, produced by Sony Pictures Imageworks Japan and Tezuka Prods., debuted on Kids' WB! in the fall of 2004. *Astro Boy* tells a *Pinocchio*-esque tale of a robot boy, modeled after the deceased son of a research scientist, who becomes a renowned superhero complete with laser-firing fingers, keen hearing and jet-powered boots. The toy-like quality of the property makes it a perfect candidate for the new CG animation era.

## Mr. Peabody & Sherman Take Movie to DreamWorks

DreamWorks Animation is ready to fire up the old WABAC Machine again. Jeffrey Katzenberg and company recently announced that the studio has taken over plans to make a feature film based on the classic Jay Ward cartoon series **Mr. Peabody & Sherman**. Director Rob Minkoff (*The Lion King*, *Stuart Little*, *Stuart Little 2*) is still attached to helm the project, and Bullwinkle studio's Tiffany Ward (daughter of the late Jay Ward) and Classic Media's Eric Ellenbogen will exec produce the movie.

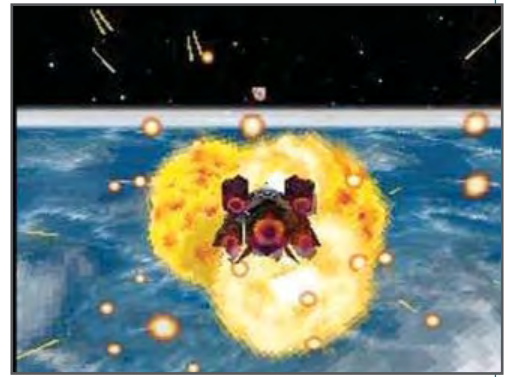
Introduced in 1959 as part of the *Rocky & Bullwinkle* hour, *Mr. Peabody & Sherman* follows the time-traveling adventures of two bespectacled pals, a dog genius and his pet boy, who use their WABAC machine to solve history's mysteries. "One of the most gratifying relationships in my 20-plus year career of making animated movies has been that of working with Rob Minkoff on *The Lion King*," says DreamWorks Animation CEO Jeffrey Katzenberg. "I've waited more than a decade to have an opportunity to work with him again, so I could not be more excited to welcome him to DreamWorks Animation." No word on whether the time-traveling duo will also get a new CG-animated TV show in this new incarnation. ■



A  
SWORD-  
BEARING  
PRINCESS  
WITH...  
ATTITUDE!







# Beware the *Lunar Knights*

Konami and Production I.G sink their fangs into Nintendo's DS. **by Ryan Ball**

If this year's Halloween festivities haven't quenched your thirst for all things ghoulish, there's still some blood-sucking fun to be had with Konami's *Lunar Knights* for Nintendo DS handhelds. Fans of Konami's *Boktai* for GameBoy Advance will especially love this vampire-slaying adventure title, which features cutscenes animated by Production I.G, a respected anime studio whose credits include *Kill Bill Vol. 1* and *The Animatrix*.

*Lunar Knights* is basically a DS version of *Boktai*, with a

few twists. *Boktai* actually had a solar sensor that forced gamers to venture out into the sunlight in order to kill enemies, but that gimmick has been abandoned in favor

of new gameplay dynamics that take advantage of nearly every unique feature of the DS unit.

"We are using the dual-screen layout of the system to display both the core action and a constant read-out of the in-game weather and time," says Testuya Hiyoshi, associate product manager for Konami. "You'll be able to see whether it's night or day and [monitor]



various weather effects such as precipitation, wind and humidity, all of which have an effect on the gameplay."

Hiyoshi also tells us that the DS touch screen and microphone can be used to unleash a variety of elemental attacks. For example, players can blow into the microphone to create a blizzard and swirl the stylus on the touch screen to summon a tornado. In addition, the unit's wireless functionality allows four players take part in mini-games using just one game cartridge.

Another feature that sets *Lunar Knights* apart from other adventure scrollers is its 3D space shooting segments, which have players engage in aerial dogfights in their customizable Casket Rockets. "These levels are fully controlled with the touch screen and have their own nuances and gameplay mechanics for players to master," Hiyoshi remarks.

The key to success for any game is making sure gamers don't get bored with it. According to Hiyoshi, Konami has tackled this issue by making players feel like they are part of a living, breathing world. "Just as the local weather man can never really predict what the weather will be like the next day, players will always have something new and unexpected to look forward to when they turn on their DS and start playing *Lunar Knights*." ■

***Lunar Knights* is slated for release exclusively on the Nintendo DS in November.**



# From *Gish* to Goldrush

*Gish* Creator Edmund McMillen answers a few questions about his new indie Flash game, *Blast Miner*. by Ryan Ball

**Q:** What's the basic premise of the game?

**A:** *Blast Miner* is an action/arcade game where you blow through the ground using explosives to mine for gold.

**Q:** What hardware and software did you use to create it? How long did it take?

**A:** Alex Austin programmed *Blast Miner* in C and I animated it in Flash and edited in PhotoShop. The game took us about five months to finish.

**Q:** What were your goals for the game's animation?

**A:** The core of the game's animation comes from the crazy miner that freaks out in the top left of your screen. He's basically there to amuse you and react to your combos and explosions as you play, so my main goal was to really go nuts with his reactions to try and get a chuckle out of the player, or at least a look of confusion. All the game's explosions, smoke and sparks are also fully animated, and Alex's lighting and blur effects really spice it up a ton.

**Q:** How is this game different from past games you created?

**A:** *Blast Miner* isn't as character driven as *Gish* was, so there was a lot less animation work on my end.



We basically just wanted to make something the player could pick up and play that was also unique, fun and visually impressive.

**Q:** What, in your opinion, is the coolest thing about the game?

**A:** The explosions are pretty awesome, and it is really fulfilling to blow stuff up all day, but coolest thing about *Blast Miner* is its unique and addictive gameplay. We really went all out to give the player something new (that just happens to resemble something old). It may look like your average *Tetris* clone with explosions, but *Blast Miner* is a really unique experience that has to be played to be understood. Oh, it also has vs. ■

*Blast Miner* launched on September 14 and is available exclusively at [www.blastminer.com](http://www.blastminer.com) and [Cryptic-sea.com](http://Cryptic-sea.com). McMillen says a retail version is coming for PC, and they are talking to Nintendo and Microsoft about live releases for the Nintendo DS and Xbox.

JOIN THE  
QUEST  
FOR THE  
ULTIMATE  
SOURCE OF  
ALMIGHTY  
STRENGTH!

Attila  
And the  
Great  
Blue  
Bean

Visit MarVista at  
MIPCOM stand 09.06  
Call 310.737.0950 or  
e-mail [info@marvista.net](mailto:info@marvista.net)







# TO SEWER WITH LOVE

How directors David Bowers and Sam Fell and their talented team merged the Aardman stop-motion animation style with DreamWorks' CG-powered technology to create the upcoming action-packed comedy, *Flushed Away*. by Ramin Zahed

FEATURE

What happens when a mouse gets flushed down the toilet? Several years ago, Aardman animator Sam Fell posed this pressing question as he was pondering a new feature. More than four years later, a fantastic feature-length movie built on the premise will answer that question, in addition to another important puzzler: What does a DreamWorks' CG-driven feature based on the hand-made Aardman Animation stop-motion style look like? And more important, will the venture swim beautifully or go down the drain?

During my recent visit to the DreamWorks campus in Glendale, Calif., director David Bowers and several of his team members assured me that all sorts of efforts were made to make sure the CG-animation reflected the beloved Aardman style. Fans of Nick

Park's *Wallace and Gromit* shorts, *Chicken Run* and last year's Oscar-winning *Curse of the Were-Rabbit* feature



(both of which were released by DreamWorks) are absolutely fanatic about the Bristol-based toon house and its instantly recognizable stop-motion plasticine animation.

Although some purists may wonder why bother doing the movie in CG, co-directors Bowers and Fell explain that because of the sheer size of the project and the special effects involved in the water scenes, it would have been almost impossible to deliver *Flushed Away* in stop-mo. "Originally, we planned to do a mixture of stop-motion and CG, but when we really focused on the scope of the movie, we realized that it would be very difficult to create all the water sequences," says Fell, who has been with Aardman for many years. "You can work on a much bigger canvas in a CGI environment."

Fell points out that the studio in which *Chicken Run* was shot would be too small for this movie. For example, a crowd scene towards the end of *Flushed Away*, takes our hero—a sheltered pet mouse called Roddy, voiced by the versatile actor Hugh Jackman—to an underworld version of Piccadilly Circus in London's West End. The scene features close to a 1,000 background characters. "We have over a 1,000 characters walking around, reading





**Inspired by the Past:** Keen observers may notice how directors Sam Fell (left) and David Bowers were influenced by classics such as *Laurel and Hardy* shorts, *The Lavender Hill Mob* and *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. High on their list of priorities was to make sure the characters were well-rounded and the story was as entertaining as all the past Aardman projects.

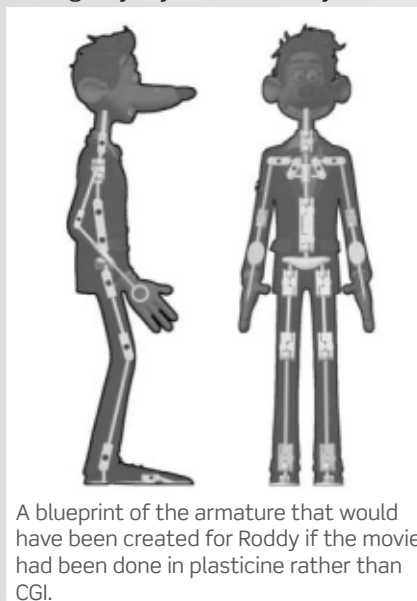


newspapers, just going about their business,” says Fell. “Having a thousand people animating puppets would be close to impossible. CG allows you to do that, and you can refine and animate over and over again. I love stop-frame animation, but once it’s been shot, you have to live with it. In CG, you can go back in and punch up something, sharper and edit—it’s more flexible and a lot less painful.”

Having worked on a few CG-animated commercials created by Aardman, Fell did feel at home with the technology. He says he found a lot of similarities between the two media, since they’re both essentially 3D. “Another similarity is that we get to work with the same kind of artists and craftsmen—brilliant cameramen, art director, lighting directors, costume directors that we did in the stop-frame movies,” he notes. “Plus, we made an extra effort to make sure everything was a bit *wonky*. In the computer world, you can make a perfectly animated bottle, but we’d have to make them a bit uneven. Nothing was allowed to be clinical. We made the sets and the objects all a bit scooped up. It’s a bit ironic to think that we spend such a big-budget movie to make things that look like a pile of rubbish

[since they’re in a London’s sewer]!”

Bowers is also quite proud of the way the feature has retained that Aardman touch as well. The director, whose career in feature animation goes back to 1988’s *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*, worked as story artist on DreamWorks’ features such as *The Prince of Egypt*, *The Road to El Dorado* and *Shark Tale* and as senior storyboard artist on *Wallace & Gromit in The Curse of the Were-Rabbit*. “Everything is very tactile and real,” he said. “The goofy eyes, the funny mouth



A blueprint of the armature that would have been created for Roddy if the movie had been done in plasticine rather than CGI.

shapes..what’s known as the Aardman look, we based everything on that. We don’t have any of the trappings of the regular CG projects ... our characters don’t have CG hair and no CG cloth simulation. We didn’t use those CG tools to keep the organic, human feel of the characters.”

For Wendy Rogers, the film’s visual effects supervisor, re-creating the puppeteer’s gentle touch was a big challenge. “We had to try and create rigs for the characters so that they would move and act just like puppet armatures would do,” says Rogers. “At Aardman, they touch the puppets so lightly between frames that sometimes they’re not really touching them. We don’t have subtle equipment like that in CG, we’d have to create 600 controls in the face to get the range of motions in a character’s mono-brow. Gromit, for example, doesn’t speak, so you can see all this range of expressions come from a one-inch-tall surface on the puppet’s face.”

The film’s villainous Toad (voiced by Sir Ian McKellen) and his henchman Le Frog (Jean Reno) were two of the toughest characters to bring to CG life, according to Rogers. “Toad has this extreme mono-brow and a very



round face. Le Frog is also very hard to animate because he is shaped like an M&M candy... he's tough to light because he has this flat front and flat back, but he's not really curved. He just looks like he is. From a rigging point of view, we had to put a lot of effort in him when he opens his mouth, because his head has to bob out."

Supervising animator Jason Spencer-Galsworthy who worked on the film's nefarious Toad, agrees with Rogers, about the level of complexity involved in animating the villains. "We studied the movements of very large people closely to duplicate them for our Toad," he recalls. "I believe we looked at Alfred Hitchcock for inspiration. It's a misconception that large people move slower than others. It was crucial for us to give Toad the ability to jump around as he chases the other characters. He's got a lot of strength for a big guy like that."

The CG team relies on DreamWorks/PDI's own proprietary animation software, along with Maya tools and Global Illumination techniques to recreate a topsy-turvy world and to bring a unique physically tactile quality to the texturing. "What is outstanding is the way we've used the tools we have to create a movie with the scope the directors had envisioned," says Rogers. "It's not just a slavish duplication of a miniature state...it's using CG to pay homage to Aardman stop-motion."

Emmy-winner Scott Wills (*Samurai Jack*, *Star Wars: Clone Wars*), who is the film's art director, raves about the CG-animated water sequences, especially one in which waves of water turn into ice. Another tough task was creating CG lighting that was reminiscent of Aardman's films. "Aardman sets are built in the real world and photographed like real life," says Wills. "We had to match that level of realism in our lighting. In most CG films, the characters are always brightly lit, so we had to really change that in our movie. Of course we



had the advantage in our film because we could put our camera anywhere and not worry about building these huge sets to accommodate the puppets."

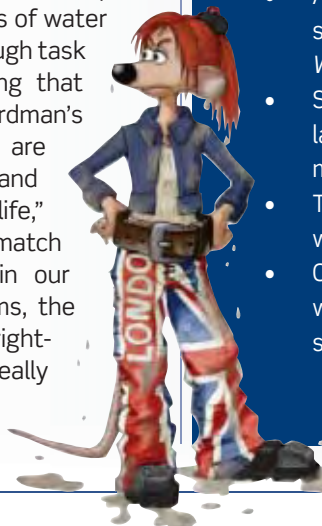
The muted colors on display in the film are also a deliberate homage to the kind of old-fashioned ('40s-era Britain) we are used to seeing in period pictures). Wills admires the film's look in comparison to the color-saturated frames we've seen in recent CG movies. "CG can be too candy-colored at

times," he notes. "We wanted to get the same Aardman colors, which can be very colorful, in a more naturalistic way. We have a scene where we go to Rita, the heroine's house and meet her brothers and sisters—the interior of the house is really amazing. When we were working on the scenes deep in the sewage, Jeffrey's [Katzenberg, DreamWorks Animation chief] big concern was to strike a delicate balance ... Yes, this was a sewer and it was filled

## Seven Flushed Factoids



- The first creature Roddy meets in the world beneath London, is a slug voiced by none other than Hugh Jackman. The slug's voice was reworked electronically so that the two characters would scream in a similar way. Of course, the slug does it at a much higher pitch.
- If all the tunnels in the movie were laid end-to-end, they would cover 6.6 miles. There are 3,000 miles of sewers underneath London in the real world.
- The 34 sequences in the movie encompass 1,466 shots and over 109,058 frames. Planning the film required 60,000 storyboard panels.
- A *Chicken Run* chicken can be found on the second page of Toad's scrapbook. Gromit's head is on a pencil top and the penguin from *The Wrong Trousers* is on a stamp on the Jammy Dodger.
- Some of the film's fast-flowing water was animated using different layers which were shaped by the application of noise deformation. This method programs the water to act like bars on a stereo.
- There are 12 water layers in the sewers. In the close-ups, the water was rendered as a surface rather than a particle.
- One of the first ideas for the movie involved pirates, but the premise was scratched because in those pre-*Pirates of the Caribbean* days, sea-faring rascals were not considered to be big box office draws.



—Rita's character design by Michael Salter.





Underground world design by Scott Wills (color) and Pierre-Olivier Vincent (sketch).



Jason Spencer-Galsworthy



Scott Wills



Wendy Rogers

with junk, but we didn't want it to look depressing! Things had to be beaten up, but the right kind of beaten up!"

To add authenticity to the project, some members of the creative team actually ventured down a manhole in London to experience firsthand how it would feel to be flushed away. As Bowers tell us, "Yes, I joke about the fact that the crew on *El Dorado* got to see the ancient Mayan ruins and the ones working on *The Prince of Egypt* got to travel to Egypt to research the project, and I got to go down a manhole in the East End of London! And I have to tell you, our imaginary world is much more interesting."

Of course, one of the main contributors to Aardman's success are the entertaining stories and the charming characters that guide us through the plot. The directors believe that the reason the movie's story went through so many changes—Fell admits that at one point, over a hundred versions of the script were piled up in his office—is because they wanted to tell a story that involved a character we could all care about and root for. The film's hero, Roddy, for example, was first written as a posh social climber who had two pet hamsters. Only a year



Roddy's character design by Michael Salter.

ago, the creative team decided that Roddy needed to be more likeable and more charming (more, in fact, like Hugh Jackman when he hosts the Tony awards). So they scrapped the hamsters and made him a hero who learns about the importance of friendship and family through his encounter with Rita the River Rat (the voice of Kate Winslet).

"One of my favorite parts of the movie is a quiet scene between Roddy and Rita at bedtime," says Fell. "Sometimes the obligatory quiet scenes can be a bit dull, but this one is absolutely electric and absorbing. For us, character has always been central. You have to understand the characters intimately and believe that they are unique in the world. What you see in the Aardman movies is a great love of the craft, which is true about all the movies that can stand the test of time. It's not about being flashy, but paying attention to details and embracing simplicity in character design." ■

**Paramount releases DreamWorks/Aardman's *Flushed Away* in theaters nationwide on November 3rd.**





## MY PROM DATE WAS A ZOMBIE!

Bill Plympton's *Hair High* finally makes its big-screen debut. **by Ryan Ball**

### FEATURE

It's been a few years since animation fans logged onto indie animator Bill Plympton's web "Ani-Cam" to watch over his shoulder as he animated his latest feature, longing to see those magnificent drawings come to life on the screen. Since then, the outrageous film has only been seen by those fortunate enough to catch a screening at one of the festivals it has graced. That's all changed since Plympton took the show on the road, kicking off a series of North American limited engagements.

Equal parts *Rebel Without a Cause* and *Night of the Living Dead*, *Hair High* blends '50s nostalgia with comically grotesque horror to tell the story of a teenage couple who were murdered on prom night one year prior. Plympton, who wrote, directed, produced and self-financed the film, managed (with the help of actress and distant cousin

Martha Plympton) to land a star-studded voice cast. Contributors include Dermot Mulroney (*The Family Stone*), Sarah Silverman (*Jesus is Magic*), David Carradine (*Kill Bill Vol. 2*), Keith Carradine (HBO's *Deadwood*), Justin Long (*Accepted*), Beverly D'Angelo (HBO's *Entourage*), Ed Begley Jr. (*Arrested Development*), Michael Showalter (*Wet Hot American Summer*), *Simpsons* creator Matt Groening and Oscar-nominated indie animator Don Hertzfeldt (*Rejected*).

"We had high hopes for it," Plympton tells us. "There are a lot of big-name actors in it, it has a great story and I think it's one of the best film's I've done, and no one bid on it. We had a few small bids, but, quite frankly, the money they were offering was as much as I could make on a DVD sale. Why should I let them have the DVD rights to something I could sell better and make all the money myself? So we decided about nine months ago to distribute it ourselves."

Whereas most animators have long since embraced the conveniences afforded by computer technology, Plympton produced *Hair High* as he's always worked, drawing each frame by hand, painting on cels and capturing on 35mm film. However, he says this is the last of his films to be produced this way. For his next film, *Idiots and Angels*, he's still drawing by hand but is putting aside the movie camera and doing all the coloring on a computer. "It took a long time to do the camera and we had 12 people here cleaning the cels, which is really expensive," he notes. "So we decided to go with the computer stuff because you don't need to clean them. You can get sort of messy and that's okay."

As labor intensive as Plympton's production pipeline is, he says the toughest scenes were the ones he didn't tackle. "I wanted to do some really scary snakes, spiders and bugs crawling all over people but, unfortunately,



Bill Plympton

**Welcome to Weirdsville:** Bill Plympton's new 2D-animated feature *Hair High* is a wild cross between Stephen King's horror tales and *American Graffiti*.



I ran out of money and couldn't do it," he remarks. "That's what really gave me the hardest time, not being able to draw those scenes. Putting all those bugs and snakes in would be really labor-intensive, not only for the animation, but also for the coloring because all the tiny little scales and bug antennae would be hard to color. I'm hoping that, if the film does well, then maybe on the DVD I can include those shots."

*Hair High* had its world premiere at the Slamdance Film Festival and was

have high hopes for it in the U.S.," says Plympton.

After wrapping *Hair High*, Plympton spent a couple of months animating the short, *Guide Dog*, which was nominated for an Oscar in 2005. He also teamed with writer/producer Dan O'Shannon to direct and animate *The Fan and the Flower*, which earned him the 2005 Annie Award for Best Short Film. He's currently hard at work on *Idiots and Angels*, which he says is a David Lynchian story about a selfish man who wrestles

Plympton fans can also see his off-the-wall sensibilities on display in Steve Anderson's eyebrow-raising documentary, *F\*ck*, which explores the origins and controversies surrounding the famous four-letter word. The prolific animator says he's committed to making a feature film every two or three years and doing a couple of shorts in between. "This is what gives me a lot of pleasure and a lot of enjoyment, making these cartoons," he says passionately. "I hope I keep doing it until I'm 90 years old!"

*Hair High* has so far opened in select theaters in Florida, Oregon, Washington, New Mexico and Texas. Plympton hopes the film will garner good press as part of the "Month of Horror" festival at the Two Boots Pioneer Theatre in New York City (Oct. 18-25) so he can book venues in San Francisco, Los Angeles and other major cities. The film will most likely be distributed this spring through New Video, the company that handles most of his films on home video. ■

For more info, visit [www.hairhigh.com](http://www.hairhigh.com).

"This is what gives me a lot of pleasure and a lot of enjoyment. I hope I keep doing it [making cartoons] until I'm 90 years old."

— Bill Plympton

eventually picked up by IDT (now Starz Media), which handled all foreign sales. The film ran in around 100 theaters in France and also got released in Korea, Spain, Portugal, Australia and Israel. "It's doing really well overseas, so we

with his good side when he wakes up one day with wings growing out of his back. Like *Hair High*, the film is being animated live in front of Plympton's Ani-Cam, which fans can view at [www.plymptoons.com](http://www.plymptoons.com).





# Nightmare in the Third Dimension

Disney and ILM give *The Nightmare Before Christmas* a 3D makeover. **by Ryan Ball**

**T**im Burton's *The Nightmare Before Christmas* grossed a respectable \$50 million domestically with its initial release in 1993, but over the years the Disney holiday favorite has seen its fan base grow through home video and sold-out Halloween screenings attended by costumed devotees who give *Rocky Horror Picture Show* fans a run for their money. Now, thanks to a special process developed by Industrial Light and Magic and Real-D's advances in stereoscopic projection, fans can experience the tale of Jack Skellington as never before.

The 3D version of *Nightmare* is produced by veteran Disney producer Don Hahn, whose credits include *Who framed Roger Rabbit*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *The Lion King* and the recent Mouse House short film, *The Little Match Girl*. He comments, "We felt that, of all movies, this one really cried

out for [3D conversion] because the stop-motion animation is pretty cool and we

thought that if we could do some tests and get a method that makes it look like you're actually in there with the puppets in that world, it would be pretty extraordinary."

ILM previously devised a method of 3D conversion for Disney's CG-animated *Chicken Little*, which involved moving the virtual camera over two or three inches to the right to provide the right-eye view, which is blended with the left-eye perspective to create a sense of dimension. But for *Nightmare*, which was shot on 35mm film and exists only in 2D, ILM had to take a more radical, time-consuming approach.

"Essentially, the process they used involved going back in to create digital puppets for all of the characters and project the original movie onto those digital puppets, and then move the camera over and re-photograph it from the right-eye perspective," Hahn explains. "It's a little like that Madam Liotta effect in the Haunted Mansion [attraction] where they're projecting a film onto a white mannequin head. This is the digital version of that effect."

In addition to creating computer models that matched the stop-motion puppets down to the individual hairs, the team at ILM had the tedious task of filling in gaps

in the backgrounds that appeared when the virtual camera was shifted ever so slightly to the right.

*Nightmare* director Henry Selick was asked to look at footage of the 3D version

to make sure it met his approval. "It's quite a challenge to separate it into layers and make it look that way, so I was a little skeptical," he admits. "But then I saw some test footage at Real-D where they'd taken the [signature] sequence from *Singing in the Rain* and made that into 3D and it was astonishing. It felt like you were there."

Selick says he had always wished *Nightmare* was shot in 3D to begin with because it provides a "magical window" into the world the artists have carefully crafted in miniature. "When I've shot stop-motion, we've had visitors, whether they're family, friends or from the studio, and they're always knocked out when they see the sets," he remarks. "You never quite capture that when shooting a flat picture."

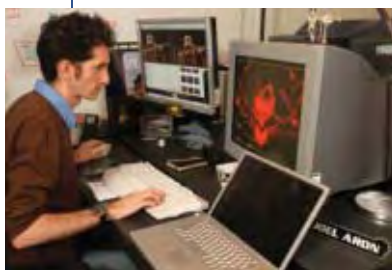
For his latest directorial effort, LAIKA's stop-motion adaptation of the Neil Gaiman book *Coraline*, Selick plans to shoot entirely in 3D and is experimenting with a motion-control rig that allows the camera to shoot a frame, then move an inch to the right and shoot the right-eye view of the same frame. Heavy production on that film is set to begin after the winter holidays with a 2007 release planned through Focus Features.

ILM spent the better part of a year converting *Nightmare*. Along with the 3D makeover, the film got a digital clean-up and a new sound mix, supervised by original sound mixer Terry Porter, that pulls certain sound effects and musical elements out into the house to wrap around the audience in the same way the visuals do. "It should be a pretty immersive experience by the time people get to see it in theatres," says Hahn. ■

**Disney will release *The Nightmare Before Christmas* 3D on Oct. 20 exclusively in theaters equipped with Real-D projectors and software. For a list of Real-D venues, go to [www.reald.com/cinema\\_theater.asp](http://www.reald.com/cinema_theater.asp).**



Don Hahn



52 x 3 minutes



# FUTZ!



READY FOR ANYTHING...  
PREPARED FOR NOTHING!

52 x 11 minutes



# best ed.

The new odd couple for kids

Half-hour Special

KIDS CAN PRESS

# If the World Were a Village



Visit us at Mipcom Booth 00.01

**9 Story Entertainment**  
33 Fraser Ave., Suite G09  
Toronto, ON, M6K 3J9  
CANADA  
Phone: 416-530-9900  
Fax: 416-530-9935  
[www.9story.com](http://www.9story.com)



# Future Daze

Kamiyama's *Solid State Society* is the latest chapter in the *Ghost in the Shell* animated epic, but you will have to wait until 2007 to enjoy its sci-fi visions. **by Patrick Drazen**

**W**hen *Ghost in the Shell* appeared in 1995, it was immediately recognized as a breakthrough in anime. Western fans included filmmakers like Quentin Tarantino, James Cameron and especially Larry and Andy Wachowski, whose 1999 hit *The Matrix* relied for a number of its scenes on *Ghost in the Shell*. Now, after two films and two seasons of television



anime (under the name *Ghost in the Shell: Stand Alone Complex*), as well as video games and spin-off novels, the appearance of the third *Ghost in the Shell* feature film clearly shows that the title has become a franchise.

*Ghost in the Shell: Stand Alone Complex—Solid State Society* is based, as the title suggests, on the two-season TV series rather than on the previous movies. Written and directed by Kenji Kamiyama, it still follows the futuristic manga by Masamune Shirow, and the animation is still from Production I.G. As with the TV series, music is by songwriter and Annie Award-nominated composer Yoko Kanno.

The “105 minutes of nonstop action and suspense” (as the trailer for the film describes *Solid State Society*) takes place in 2034, two years after the *Stand Alone Complex* “*Second Gig*” TV season and its story of refugees, riots and nuclear threats. Section Nine (a covert unit that tackles web-based crimes as well as jobs too difficult or politically sensitive for regular channels) has added new personnel in the interim and promoted Togusa, the un-cyborg member of the team. Meanwhile, 20,000 people have gone missing and the network is

plagued by a hacker known as the Puppet Master. (This is not, however, the “villainous” software from the first *Ghost in the Shell* movie that went by the same name; that first film and this new one use two different Japanese words that both happen to translate as “Puppet Master.”) Major Motoko Kusanagi is out of the picture—at least, at first. It’s safe to assume

that, just as in *Innocence*, the second *Ghost in the Shell* movie, the Major will show up.

But she won’t show up at a movie house. *Solid State Society* was released September 1 on Japanese pay-per-view on the SKYPerfecTV! satellite network; the DVD will appear on Japanese shelves in November, and the American disc will arrive in 2007.

It won’t show up in an amateur subtitled “fansub,” either, if distributor Bandai Entertainment USA has anything to say about it. In a recent press release, Bandai warns that “The creation of translated versions of *Solid State Society* is considered an unauthorized derivative and constitutes infringement of the intellectual property rights in the work as well as unfair competition...”

The realities of 21st century media are clearly hitting home in Japanese pop culture. The producers want to protect their investment: *Solid State Society* cost about \$3.2 million to create—a relatively small budget compared to Hollywood’s current crop of animated films (such as the reported \$75 million to produce *Monster House*).

An unlikely partner in the anime is the Nissan car company. *Solid State Society*



features two Nissan “concept cars,” both designed in 2005 and displayed at American auto shows: the Nissan Sport Concept, deliberately designed to evoke video game racers, and the luxury six-seater Infiniti Kuraza. As to why Nissan is providing product placement for cars that are apparently three decades away, Nissan’s chief creative officer Shiro Nakamura says, “Japanese animation is being taken more seriously as art every year around the world, and the concept cars in this film are rendered with particularly high quality; they’re just wonderful. We hope that besides contributing to a great film experience, these very exciting images will bring the Nissan brand to a new spectrum of customers.”

So, after again saving the worldwide web as we know it, will Section Nine finally get a bit of rest? Not according to



members of the Production I.G. panel at the 2006 Anime Expo in Anaheim, Calif. They gave no details: just a confirmation that the *Stand Alone Complex* TV series wasn’t over yet.

A good cyborg, like a solid anime franchise, just keeps rolling along. ■

**Patrick Drazen is a Chicago-based anime and manga expert whose book credits include *Anime Explosion! The What? Why? & Wow! of Japanese Animation* (Stone Bridge Press).**

# Hot Discs

Our picks for this month's best animated DVD releases

## Harveytoons: The Complete Collection [Sony Wonder, \$39.98]



**C**asper the Friendly Ghost, Wendy the Good Little Witch, Little Audrey, Baby Huey and Richie Rich are all well represented in this collection of Harveytoon shorts from the '40s and

'50s. Originally packaged as a TV anthology series that ran in the late '90s on Fox Family and later on Boomerang, this four-disc collection offers about 3.5 hours of nostalgic treats. Obviously, these toons may not be up there with the Warner Bros. and Disney shorts (and there's no way this is really the *complete* collection!), but anyone who grew up with Harvey Comics or remembers these kinder, gentler characters from a gone-by era should get a kick out of this classic collection. [Release date: Oct. 3]

## South Park: Hits Vol. 1—Matt and Trey's Favorite Episodes [Paramount, \$26.99]

**G**ood things come to those who wait—and didn't spend all their dollars on the previous eight *South Park* DVDs. Just in time for the holiday gift-buying season, the bad-boy creators of *South Park* have



picked their favorite ten episodes of the series and put them on two glorious discs. "AWESOM-O," "Best Friends Forever," "Casa Bonita," "Good Times with Weapons," "Red Hot Catholic Love," "The Return of the Fellowship of the Ring to the Two Towers," "Scott Tenorman Must Die," "Stupid Spoiled Whore Video Playset," "Towelie" and the Emmy-nominated Tom Cruise episode, "Trapped in the Closet," are all included in this killer package. Matt and Trey also share frank and often hilarious commentaries on each episode. As an extra bonus, you can also check out the original "The Spirit of Christmas" short that launched this mad empire. [Release date: Oct. 3]

## The Fox and the Hound: 25th Anniversary Edition [Disney, \$29.99]

**O**riginally released in theaters in the summer of 1981, this beautifully animated 2D effort from the Mouse House was one of the final efforts of the studio before what became the Broadway-musical ventures. Directed by Ted Berman and Richard Rich, the story was based on Daniel P. Mannix's book about the friendship between a hound puppy and a fox kit who are forced to become enemies

because of their places in the animal world. In the Disney canon, the movie holds a special place as it was one of the last collaborations between the old masters (Frank Thomas, Ollie Johnston and Woo-



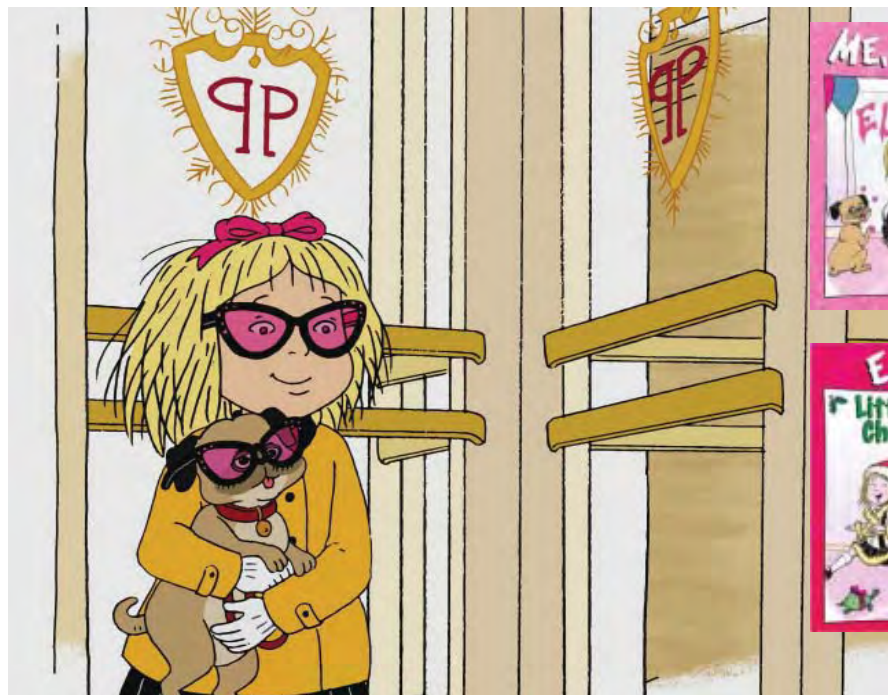
lie Reitherman) and the new guard. The special 25th anniversary release also includes a peek at next month's direct-to-DVD sequel, sing-along songs, a DVD storybook and two bonus shorts "Lambert The Sheepish Lion" and "Lend a Paw". Jazz fans should also delight in the fact that the late Pearl Bailey lent her voice to the feature (as Big Mama) alongside Mickey Rooney, Kurt Russell and Sandy Duncan. Overall, it's definitely worth the trip back to a time when CG didn't rule and our animal pals weren't all smart-alecky pop culture junkies. [Release date: Oct. 10]

## Over the Hedge [Paramount, \$29.99]

**C**omic actor Steve Carell single-handedly stole the movie with his memorable turn as Hammy the hyperactive squirrel in this late-spring DreamWorks release. Directed by Tim Johnson and Karey Kirkpatrick, this happy, shiny, mile-a-minute CG-animated movie centers on a family of woodland critters who band together against the evil forces of suburbia and consumerism. Bruce Willis, Gary Shandling and William Shatner also offered solid vocal turns, but critics were not amused with the break-neck pace, the product placements and the by-the-numbers plot developments. Nevertheless, we loved the lush colors and the amazing depiction of fur, the grass and the exteriors. Maybe next time the studio's casting director will learn to say, "no", to Avril Lavigne's people! [Release date: Oct. 17] ■







# The Plaza's Little Firecracker

Eloise, the popular heroine of Thompson and Knight's book series, comes to animated life in two new Film Roman specials. **by Evelyn Jacobson**

**E**loise, the spunky six-year-old children's book character who lives at the Plaza Hotel, is making her animated debut on the small screen just in time for the holidays. IDT Entertainment, now Starz Media, has produced and distributed the first two in a series of six hour-long animated shows that will bring the much-loved classic children's heroine to another young generation.

The series, whose stories are loosely based on the classic tales written by Kay Thompson and illustrated by Hilary Knight, was originally produced by Film Roman for DVD release. But the recent merger of IDT, whose companies included Film Roman and DVD distributor Anchor Bay Entertainment, with Starz, operator of premium cable channel Starz Kids & Family, provided Eloise with a TV debut recently. *Me, Eloise* and *Eloise: Little Miss Christmas* hit stores October 10. The remaining titles in the series—*Eloise Goes*

*to School*, *Eloise Goes to Hollywood*, *Eloise's Rawther Unusual Halloween* and *Eloise in Springtime* will later be released on DVD.

"Part of the reason Starz purchased Film Roman was to create original content," says Malisa Caroselli, producer of the *Eloise* series, and *King of the Hill*, one of Film Roman's famous animated shows. "It's the first project, the first original program releasing on Starz Kids & Family. It's exciting and there's a lot of interest for us to produce [future shows]."

Film Roman, the primetime animation shop that also produces *The Simpsons* became involved with the *Eloise* series when it was tapped by Handmade Films, the rights holder and producer of two live-action films based on the books. "They came to us because we could distribute, and they knew Film Roman would respect the property," says Scott Greenberg, president and COO of Film Roman.

For the animators at Film Roman,



*Eloise* provided an opportunity to show off their range. In an environment where primetime budgets are biggest and straight-to-DVD children's projects are on the lower end, the company's finest clamored to get involved with the project. "I had directors doing storyboards and people taking pay cuts to get involved," notes Caroselli, who remembered the children's tales from her own childhood.

With a hand-picked team from *King of the Hill*, including Wesley Archer at the helm, the six stories were created using a traditional primetime overlapped schedule that allowed everyone to work on three or four titles at a time; each show taking seven months to produce. (All of the shows were produced while *King of the Hill* was on hiatus.) Sending parts of the animation process overseas helped deadlines and budgeting as well. "It's unheard of to do such high quality work in such a short amount of time," says Caroselli.

Archer, who knew he was dealing with a classic and iconic series, was careful in shaping the overall look. To stay true to Hilary Knight's elegant, mostly black-and-white fine-lined drawings, and ample use of white space, he chose to keep the animation in 2D and expanded on the original's sparse use of color. "I wanted to remain true to the book and wonderful world Kay Thompson and Hilary Knight created," he says. "As a director, I wanted to focus on including the white space and line quality of that world and depict the source material in its natural state with an appropriate sense of time and space, and I think we did that. With color we were able to jump off into something beyond the book."

In keeping with the tradition in animation, the voice cast was recorded before the animation process began. While the team had Tim Curry and Lynn Redgrave in mind for Mr. Salamone, the hotel manager and Nanny respectively, they decided to search for a child actor to voice Eloise, instead of casting an adult. "Eloise is such a force of life, that was one of our biggest challenges," says Caroselli, who found her Eloise in eight-year-old Mary Matilyn Mouser. "All of the actors gave us so much to work with, it almost animated itself." ■

**Anchor Bay's *Me, Eloise* and *Eloise: Little Miss Christmas* will be available in stores on October 10. Each DVD sells for \$14.98.**



# Diving Under the Sea Again

Filmmakers Ron Clements and John Musker discuss the re-mastering of the newly released *Little Mermaid* DVD.

by Jake Friedman

When the fans speak, the Mouse listens. Disney's most requested title, 1989's *The Little Mermaid*, is joining the select list of Platinum Edition DVDs this month to make it Disney's eighth in the collection. Produced at a time when there were talks of cutting Disney's feature animation division all together, *Mermaid* heralded a new age in Disney animation, paving the way for other heartfelt, Broadway-inspired projects like *Beauty and the Beast*, *Aladdin* and *Hercules*, to name a few.

This new DVD collection contains commentary by co-writers/co-directors Ron Clements and John Musker, as well as composer Alan Menken. The second disc also offers a digital simulation of a *Little Mermaid* theme park ride that never saw fruition, narrated by the original Imagineers. There's also a new documentary chronicling the ascent of the Disney company's executive staff and the spearheading of *Mermaid*. Dozens of interviews, from actors to animators to members of the executive board, offer a window into the making of the two-time Oscar-winning (Best Song and Score) film with delicious anecdotes and archival home footage.

"Nothing's been added or deleted from the original film. It's still the same as you remember, but just some little mistakes have been

cleaned up," notes Clements, who along with Musker was closely involved in the re-mastering of the movie. "The film was the last to use hand-painted cels. We had some issues with the color," says Musker, "as we shot the film on EK Stock instead of three-strip Technicolor, partially as a money-saving technique. But then we couldn't get the colors looking the way we wanted to, and it was leading to all sorts of problems. All the different shades of red were turning into one color. It wasn't until this DVD restoration that the colors look like what we had wanted."

"Also, looking at the VHS release, the older version had much thicker lines around the characters because of our attempts to compensate for EK's lower contrast. If you compare it to most any scene in the restored DVD, you'll see a more delicate line around the characters than in the original video release. And in Ursula's grays and lavenders, there's some paint crawl, which was magnified in the earlier versions. These were all issues that the restoration was able to help fix."

"We had Ian Gooding at Disney, who has a great eye for color, helping us out, as well as Tim Peeler over at the Technicolor labs," Clements points out. "Terry Porter, who did the original sound mix, did a new mix using new sound technology to make it a little richer. So

it's the same film, but just a little enhanced."

In the 1970s, Musker attended CalArts while Clements came to Disney straight out of high school. They both wound up as animators, and from there moved to storyboard artists. "We also both love to write," adds Musker. "We knew each other from *The Fox and the Hound*," says Clements. "We worked on *The Black Cauldron* and shared some of the frustrations with that. I think we have the same sensibility—we're about the same age, we're both from the Midwest, we have the same cultural influences. But I asked John if he was interested in collaborating on a script. It hadn't really been done before, but we found that we have different strengths and weaknesses."

Their writing process is a portrait of true collaboration. "Once we have the basic story worked out, John begins the scriptwriting process, in long hand on a legal pad, free form and improvisational. He writes scenes over and over again, including dialogue and visual things, and he does this fairly quickly. When I read it, I go through it and type it up, editing it and sometimes re-writing it. But he doesn't see what I do until the script is finished, and when he reads it, it's been so long that it's almost fresh for him."

While they were directing the film, Clements and Musker marveled at the seamless progression from script to screen. "We had our share of executive notes," says Musker, "but we were able to fend off the questionable ones and learn from the good ones."

"It's common for films to blow up with problems in the middle," says Clements. It's kind of rare and unique that *Mermaid* didn't. Throughout, it stayed, in essence, what it started out being."

"You have to remember that the combination of Disney animation and Broadway musical was brand new at the time," says Musker, who along with Clements has returned to the studio thanks to the arrival of John Lasseter on the scene. While it's true that there have been more than a fair share of solid Disney musicals since, *Mermaid* holds up amazingly well and has that timelessness that justly merits it a Disney classic, 17 years after it was made. ■

**Jake Friedman is a New-York-based animator. For more info, visit [www.jakefriedman.net](http://www.jakefriedman.net).**

**Disney's *The Little Mermaid* (2-Disc Special Edition, \$29.99) DVD is available in stores in October.**



# The Samurai Critic:

## Reviews of the latest anime releases on DVD



Illustration by Pres Romanillos

by Charles Solomon

The Castle of Cagliostro:  
Special Edition  
[Manga: \$24.98]

When *The Castle of Cagliostro* debuted in 1979, Lupin III was already famous in Japan; first-time director Hayao Miyazaki was not. Created by artist Kazuhiko Kato (working under the name Monkey Punch), Lupin debuted in *Weekly Manga Action* in 1967 and began his animated adventures four years later. Although he was supposed to be the direct descendant of Arsène Lupin, the gentleman thief Maurice Leblanc created in 1905, Lupin III was a rowdy ne'er-do-well with a penchant for elaborate gadgets and pretty girls. He staged fantastic heists and impossible escapes, but never managed to hang on to the loot.

Miyazaki began his film career as an in-betweener on the feature *Watchdog Bow Wow* (1963) from Toei Animation. He spent the next 16 years working his way up through the ranks, doing animation, storyboards and designs for TV series and features at Toei and other studios. He was already familiar with Kato's comic anti-hero when he co-wrote and directed *Castle of Cagliostro*: He had directed episodes of the *Lupin* TV series in 1971-1972. Miyazaki wouldn't really receive widespread attention in Japan until he began the manga series, *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* in 1984. International fame would come later.

Like many popular anime properties (and *Scooby Doo*, *Where Are You?*), all Lupin's adventures follow a basic pattern. Accompanied by his friends Jigen and Goemon, Lupin travels the world, pulling off elaborate capers and evading Interpol Inspector Zenigata, who chases him with a single-minded fanaticism that rivals Wile E. Coyote's pursuit of the Road Runner.

Daisuke Jigen can somehow aim any



weapon with deadly accuracy, although the audience rarely sees more than a beard and a cigarette beneath the brim of his fedora. Super-samurai Goemon Ishikawa XIII dispatches enemies with traditional swords and complains that low-life foes are unworthy of his blade. During their misadventures, the trio invariably encounters brunette bombshell Fujiko Mine, Lupin's sometimes friend/sometimes enemy/sometimes lover.

Although Miyazaki was obviously constrained by the formula, he managed to breathe new life into the familiar characters and situations in *Castle of Cagliostro*. Lupin and Jigen rob a casino in Monte Carlo, but discover their haul consists of the exceptional counterfeits known as "Goat Bills." They head for the miniscule Duchy of Cagliostro to find the source of the bogus cash. Their search quickly turns into a baroque adventure involving a princess in distress, a scheming pretender to the throne and any number of explosions and pratfalls.

In 1979, Miyazaki was not yet the consummate filmmaker he would be-

come, but his talent is clearly evident, even at this early stage of his career. A prolonged car chase involving Lupin and Jigen, a runaway bride and an armored sedan full of the villain's henchmen is directed with rare panache. Lupin's high- and low-tech gadgets always spoofed the James Bond movies, but Miyazaki pushes the slapstick humor. Did Sean Connery ever lose his grip and half run/half slide down the slate roof of an ancient castle? The confrontation between Lupin and the dastardly Count takes place amid the gears of a gigantic clock, a sequence that anticipates the similar fight between Basil and Rati-gan in Disney's *The Great Mouse Detective* by almost seven years (and it offers a more elaborate pay-off).

Yet amid the chaos and action, the director manages to include what admirers have come to think of as Miyazaki moments: brief, quiet scenes that capture the beauties of nature. While Jigen changes the tire on their ramshackle heap of a car, Lupin lies on the roof—and watches the shadows of the clouds drift over a grassy meadow. The pastoral mood is shattered when all hell breaks loose in the car chase. But at the end of that exhilarating sequence, the audience sees the ocean gently breaking on the rocks—while Lupin and the heroine hang precariously above the water on a hook and line he had hidden in his sleeve. Miyazaki even manages to move the complicated plot forward with a minimum of dialogue.

Ben Affleck—or Ben Stiller—could remake *The Castle of Cagliostro* virtually shot for shot and have a fast-paced, funny adventure that would top the charts on both Rotten Tomatoes and Box Office Mojo. But Hayao Miyazaki probably wouldn't be interested in directing it: he's at work on a new animated feature.



**Barefoot Gen: The Movies 1 & 2**  
 (Geneon: \$29.98)  
**Grave of the Fireflies**  
 (Central Park Media: \$29.98)

Six-year-old Keiji Nakazawa was fortunate enough to be standing in the shadow of a concrete wall outside his elementary school at 8:15 a.m. on August 6, 1945: It protected him from the deadly heat of the atomic explosion that leveled Hiroshima. His father, sister and younger brother were trapped in the ruins of their house and perished in the fires. The shock caused his mother, who was eight months pregnant, to give birth to a girl who lived only four months.

Nakazawa became a cartoonist, and after his mother died in 1966 of illness related to radiation exposure, he began drawing manga about his experiences "as a way to avenge my mother." After several shorter works, Nakazawa created *Barefoot Gen* (1973), a fictionalized autobiography that runs to seven volumes (nearly 2,000 pages). Ten years later, Nakazawa turned the first four books of "Barefoot Gen" into the script for an animated feature directed by Mamoru Shinzaki.

Nakazawa's alter ego, Gen Nakaoka is on his way to school when the bomb detonates. He makes his way back to his home through hellish scenes of ruined buildings, corpses, and hideously mutilated survivors. Forced to leave his father, sister, and brother to burn to death, Gen rescues his pregnant mother. Together, they struggle to

survive amid devastation that eclipses Dante's bleakest visions.

In 1986, Nakazawa wrote the script for a sequel set three years later that was directed by Akio Sakai and Toshio Hirata. *Gen*, his mother and his adopted younger brother Ryuta scratch out a meager living in impoverished postwar Hiroshima. As his mother slowly dies of radiation sickness, Gen and Ryuta befriend a resilient group of homeless orphans. Ultimately, Gen dedicates himself to following his father's admonition to survive, like the wheat they once planted that grows back when it's been trampled.

Although moving in their own right, neither *Barefoot Gen* movie quite matches the power of the original manga. Nakazawa presented his original story on a broad canvas that included the abuse his family endured because his father dared to voice opposition to the war, and anti-Korean prejudice in Japan. The first volume of the manga ends on a moving note, as Gen's mother holds up her newborn daughter and tells her she must never let such destruction occur again. The



wa's stark black and white drawings.

As directors, neither Shinzaki nor Sakai and Hirata can match the skill of Isao Takahata, whose almost unbearably poignant *Grave of the Fireflies* (1988) deals with many of the same issues. When their mother is killed in the fire-

bombing of Tokyo near the end of World War II, teenage Seita and his younger sister Setsuko are left on their own. They set up housekeeping in a cave in the countryside, but their meager resources are quickly exhausted: Seita steals to feed his sister. Despite his efforts, she succumbs to malnutrition. Seita returns to the city where he dies, ignored and alone in a crowded railway station.

None of the filmmakers weaken their message with superficial villains. In the two *Gen* films, Nakazawa condemns both the Americans who loosed unthinkable devastation on a largely civilian population and the Japanese leaders who insisted on continuing the war, even when their defeat became inevitable. The more subtle Takahata shows how characters who would like to help Seita and Setsuko are unable to do so. Their resources, like Japan's, are already overtaxed: anything they spare endangers their own survival.

*Barefoot Gen*, *Barefoot Gen 2* and *Grave of the Fireflies* have a lugubrious resonance at a time when violence and destruction rage throughout the world. All three films remind audiences that animation has a singular power to present the needless suffering endured by victims of war in ways that transcend national and ideological boundaries. ■



*Barefoot Gen*

screenplay lacks the depth of characterization, and ends at a less dramatic point in the narrative. The film versions of *Gen* and *Ryuta* bear an unfortunate resemblance to *Astro Boy* from some angles, and the awkward animation of the horribly burned blast victims lacks the power of Nakaza-



# MIPCOM Viewpoints: Typically Topical

**T**o some, October conjures up memories of Halloween and Oktoberfest celebrations. But if you work in the international TV industry, you know that the month can only mean it's time for the MIPCOM market which takes place at the Palais des Festivals in Cannes, France (Oct. 9-13). We talked to many of the executives, producers and buyers attending the mart to find out about some of the key forces affecting the industry this year. Here are some of the highlights. For more coverage, visit [www.animationmagazine.net/market\\_showcase.php](http://www.animationmagazine.net/market_showcase.php)

## Miles Bullough

Head of Broadcast and Development, Aardman



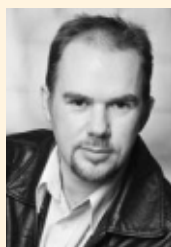
**Next Wave:** "I think the next big trend will be towards CGI series that have some of the visual flair of CGI movies. To date, the look of CG series has not been especially notable."

**On This Year's Slate:** "*Shaun the Sheep* is a classic Aardman series; great characters, great animation and great visual storytelling...*Chop Socky Chooks*, our co-pro for Cartoon Network and Teletoon is unlike anything we have done before—it's a CGI action-comedy series for six- to 11-year-olds that we hope will set a new standard for CGI series."

**Survival Tactics:** "I believe the only way indies can survive in the long run is by creating hit shows. It's not possible to make money from production, and so ancillary revenues from break-out shows are the key to success and survival today."

## Alan Gregg

VP of Intl. Production & Distribution Children's TV, Alliance Atlantis



**Next Wave:** "The buzz around mobile or portable content is keeping people up at night, but we're still dipping our toes in the water and a coherent business plan is still some ways away. Certainly, one of the key issues for distributors of kids' content is identifying a credible revenue system and there are all kinds of ethical questions at play as well. Regardless, we do know that TV is just one of many platforms and no longer enjoys the dominance it once did."

**On This Year's slate:** "I think what we are seeing now is the death of cel animation in feature films but it lives on in television where budgets are lower and where CG ironically falls flat. However, as the technology advances, the subtle shadings and expressions that cel animation exploits so well will be more readily achievable in CG. Craftspeople will always be drawn to whatever medium is best suited for their story as the likes of Brad Bird have demonstrated."

## Kevin Gillis

Exec Producer and Managing Partner, Breakthrough Animation



**On the Future of 2D:** "The historical traditions of 2D animation have left such a content imprint on the minds of television viewers and filmgoers that its extinction is as remote as eight-track tape. This doesn't even take into account that the most successful animated shows around the world today are delivered in traditional toon format. By the time *The Simpsons*, *Family Guy*, *SpongeBob SquarePants* and even *Atomic Betty* hit the retro channels, the future will be here and gone...A good idea never becomes extinct...gotta go—my record is skipping!"

## Greg Lynn

Founder and Managing Director, Chapman Entertainment



**This Year's Slate:** "We are relatively new to the children's market...our first MIPCOM Jr. was in October of 2003 where Chapman Entertainment launched *Fifi and the Flowertots* followed by *Roary the Race Car* last year. Chapman has what we consider to be a unique approach to launching shows at MIP and other markets, both launches were very successful and differ radically from the norm. We'll be looking for more sales for our shows and seeking potential co-production partners for future projects."

## Justine Bannister

Head of Intl. Distribution & Acquisitions, TV Loonland



**What's Next?** "Made-for-mobile content is becoming more and more prevalent, and many producers are getting on the band wagon, despite the uncertainty around revenue returns for content providers and the fact that there's only room in every market for very few properties. Advanced animation software for everyone means that animation now has many different formats, many facets and people are creating animation at home and putting it out there on the web...via Google video, blogging and the like. It's an exciting time but many content providers are feeling threatened by this low cost and popular animation and simply cannot afford to put this out on the web for free."

**Survival tips:** "Diversification! Finding creative ways of creating new content from classic and successful shows. In the case of TV-Loonland, *Cramp Twins* shorts & gags for mobile and online content have been derived and edited from the *Cramp Twins* original series."

## Carmen Llanos

COO, Comet Entertainment



**Future Trends:** "In TV terms and especially as far as pre-school is concerned a beautiful and simple idea like *Peppa Pig* or *Charlie and Lola* will always succeed without all the bells and whistles that CG offers. Viewers will always respond to clear, good warm story telling with loveable characters regardless of the medium. The biggest new trend, of course, is mobile content production and broadcasting. The ability of streaming high-quality video content in mobile devices is changing the way people are watching programs."

**On This Year's Slate:** "We had more traditional content before. Now we have completely different concepts, formats, audiences—from preschool to adults—and we are producing TV series, short format series, features etc. for traditional media and also for broadband and wireless, focusing in mobile content production."

**Indie Survival Tips:** "Be creative, explore new things and try to be up-to-date in latest developments as much as you can. There are alternatives that may reach a lot of public before entering the traditional media and if you have an audience before you even have a show on air that will help to boost your sales. We are distributing a show (*Sex Police*) based on a character (*Forrito/Wrappy*) that started to appear on the web as a two-minute show. It was so successful that we decided to help the creators to make a whole 13 episodes of 26 minutes show."

## Mike D. Moore

CEO, Educational Adventures; Creator, *Danger Rangers*



**Trends:** "The biggest trend I see is secondary messages being attached to programs in an effort to make them 'educational.' What differentiates the *Danger Rangers* is that our programs are born from *the cause* and built from the ground up with integrated content."

**Survival Tips:** "The best way for independents to stay competitive is to keep their eye on the ball. Staying true to the principle reasons why a product was created cannot be replaced. Passion Rules!"

**CG or 2D:** CG-animated shows are certainly becoming trendy and popular with studios. However, I do not think there are any indications that consumers prefer it, particularly children. In addition to being quite costly on a per episode basis, CGI lacks the synergistic relationship between storyboard artists and the animators. Relying on the artistic vision of computer programmers effects the storytelling of creativity of the final product. When a budget is \$100 million, you can accomplish both. However, for television, 2D will always yield a better story, in my opinion."

## Regis Brown

Exec VP, Entara Ltd



**Today's Biggest Trend:** "It's the belief that emerging platforms are going to save us. In the late '90s, it was all about getting your own broadcast platform, which was really smart back then (i.e. Saban/FOX, Disney/ABC). Today, there are so many new entertainment platforms available for kids, and so much average crap on the market, that anybody with a truly good show will for certain win the day."

**A Different World:** "CGI television animation is making more and more in-roads everyday. On top of that, you can't make it in this market with average programming. Now, more than ever, it's all about quality in the trade."

**Survival Tips:** "Stay focused on *your* show! Don't ruin your hard-earned broadcast support by delivering average programming material. If you do, you will not see additional seasons. And, if at all possible, don't water down your creative vision with comment-heavy co-production money."

## Frank Saperstein

CEO, Exec Producer, Surprise Bag Inc.



**A New Era:** "Alternative media has finally come of age and is readily accepted as conventional by a new generation of viewers who have never lived without instant media gratification. This requires content to be approached from multiple points of view and to be easily reshaped to fit into many different delivery methods."

**This Year's Slate:** "The cycle of what genre is in demand is ever shifting, if it's pre-school one market, it's boys action adventure or something else the next. The need to be able to cross platform for different delivery systems and appeal to an International audience is more important than five or ten years ago."

**Future of 2D:** "There has already been a glut of unmemorable CG-animated films this past year once again proving that content is still more important to the audience than form. As digital animation systems continue to become more versatile and efficient, the technical and creative process of creating traditional toons will change but the look and the feel will still resonate with audiences (especially for TV) and have a place in animated story telling."



## Gregory Payne

### Chairman, Foothill Entertainment



**Changing Times:** "The biggest trend in the business has to be the influence of new media applications. It is giving life to older programs and providing an incubator for new ones. It is permitting broadcasters to envision upfront, additional revenue streams for programs that they want to buy or commission. Just as the home video market revolutionized the film and television financing markets 20 years ago, the plethora of new media outlets is having the same effect today."

**Staying Au Courant:** "The slate we're bringing to the market this year is definitely different because nowadays it's not enough to have an interesting show or a cute idea. We have to commit and plan for online exploitation, interactivity and high definition broadcast; we all have to be much more technologically savvy about distribution means and methods than we ever were. Ten years ago we would offload these issues to the tech guys. Now, the buyers can be more up-to-date on these things than we are. We have had to educate ourselves mightily just to stay in the conversation because it has become part of the distribution sales discussion."

**Survival Strategies:** "The best way for indies to stay in business is to find a production partner they can trust and rely on. While all indies have always been willing to invest in their own projects to a greater or lesser extent, the stakes have grown very high. It pays to find a partner that is able to share that burden. Yes, there is less reward but there is also less risk and these days that is the name of the game. As they say, 50% of something is better than 100% of nothing."



## Christophe Goldberger

### Head of Distribution and Marketing, Icon Animation

**On Hot Trends:** "Mobile content is still the hot topic. If you want to reach kids, it's an area you can't afford to ignore. As well as being the first to new technology, kids are extremely brand-savvy so producers need to think about promoting their property in a variety of ways across a number of platforms. Personalization and ring tones have been popular for a long time but we are also seeing video streaming and branded mobile channels become more established as revenue streams. There will always be the conventional broadcast format but emerging media very much suited to animation means that it is an exciting time for the business with the potential to transform traditional business models."

At Icon Animation signing mobile partnerships has been a key focus for us and we've recently signed a mobile deal for our new series *Lola & Virginia* for which we now have content available for licensing worldwide, and hence reach our core audience in a different way to the TV screen but one that we believe enhances the brand experience significantly."

## Vince Comisso

### Partner/Executive Producer, g Story Entertainment



**Next Wave:** "The biggest trend today is towards production for multi-platform broadcast. Historically, animation has been the content that leads the way in helping the viewing public make the transition from watching entertainment on new mediums and, in today's case, on new devices."

**On Indie Survival:** "As competitive as it is, and with the pressure coming from the need to generate ancillary revenues and to deliver content to multi-platform broadcast outlets, the emphasis on quality content is greater than ever. So, as complex as the world of broadcast is today, the mandate for producers is as clear as it's ever been: produce quality content and you'll succeed."

**Will CG Take over?** "There are still many concepts, be they original ideas or adaptations of literary properties, that simply work better in traditional animation. Also, I believe that history supports the idea that there will always be the desire in people to see pencil drawn art from the human hand, whether it be still or moving art."

## Executive Snapshot: Cecilia Persson

**Title:** VP Programming, Acquisitions and Presentation

**Company:** Cartoon Network U.K.

**Years in the business:** More than 10

**Hometown:** Brighton, England

**Favorite animated show of 2006:** *Ben 10*

**Recently acquired titles:** *Ellen's Acres* (Animation Collective), *Hi-5* (Southern Star), *Storm Hawks* (Nerd Corps), and *Best Ed* (g Story).

The first two form part of a raft of recent acquisitions for a new preschool block on Cartoon Network TOO called Cartoonito.

**Things I look for in a show:** Entertaining, kid relatable, quality animation.

**Things I hate to see:** Un-original shows

**Favorite vacation spot:** Italy

**Favorite Restaurant on the Riviera:** LA Brouette

**The Movie/Book/TV show that changed my life:** *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*

**Favorite rock band/performer:** Pharrell

**Shows I always TiVo:** *Grey's Anatomy*, *Weeds*, *Entourage*, *ER*, *Lost*, *My Name is Earl*, *Without a Trace*, *24*, *Veronica Mars*, *Deadwood*.

**Why I love my job:** The programs and the people.

**Industry catch phrases I hope I'll never have to hear again:** I like catch phrases, probably use them too much myself.



— Evelyn Jacobson



IS FOR  
JOINING  
FORCES

DI-GATA DEFENDERS

When producers from Canada and around the globe work with TELETOON, the result is superior animated series – like DI-GATA Defenders. Through the development and production of quality programming, TELETOON has proven to be the first choice in animated entertainment in Canada.

teletoon  
.com

ONLY ON  
**TELETOON®**



# When Toons Take Over Cannes: MIPCOM News and Highlights

## Tropical Flavor

**P**hilippines-based production house **Top Draw Animation** and Aussie kids producer **Sticky Pictures** have joined forces to launch **Mango Distribution**, serving kids programs and animation in Asia, Australia and New Zealand. At MIPCOM, Mango will be offering *Pearlie* (a co-prod with Nelvana) and *Stuck on Squerx*, a Flash toon series based on a popular Australian board game. The distributing outfit will be headed by Top Draw owner

Wayne Dearing and Sticky Pictures' toppers Donna Andrews and Tim Brooke-Hunt. Mango Distribution will operate from offices in Sydney, Manila and New York. For more info, visit [www.mangodistribution.com](http://www.mangodistribution.com).



Pearlie

## A New Monster Is Born

**U**.K.-based kids production and distribution company **Cheeky** has joined forces with Dublin's **Monster Distributes**. Cheeky CEO Malcolm Perry, media entrepreneur Mick Pilsworth and Monster Distributes' Andrew Fitzpatrick are three main figures in this new venture, which is called—what else?—**Cheeky Monster!** The outfit's first project is *Slim Pig*, a charming 13-episode toon about a flat 2D pig living in a 3D world. Joining Slim in his adventures are his best friends, Mouse, Dog and Little Chick and several other



colorful barnyard animals. The team will also handle a preschool show called *Tipo* and a live-action older skewing show *Pluto 5* about a team of intergalactic robots. It sure looks like the beginning of a beautiful venture to us.

## Planting Tree Friends All Over the World

**N**ow that **Mondo Media**'s amazingly popular accident-prone **Happy Tree Friends** have finally made the jump from the Internet to U.S. cable—via G4's Midnight Spank late-night block, it seems that the property is bound to go even wider. Created by Kenn Navarro and Rhode Montijo, the Flash-animated toon has been one of the most popular Internet and mobile properties of recent years.

"We're pretty excited because we're ready to go worldwide," says Mondo Media CEO John Evershed. "Each half-hour show has three, seven-minute episodes, so we can develop the characters and their relationships further. However, keeping with tradition, not a word will be uttered!"

Fans can pick up three compilation DVDs in the U.S., and a special Christmas DVD will also hit stores in the next few weeks. In addition, BCI will offer the 39-episode collection of the new series on DVD in December. Evershed tells us that online, the show is tracking 10 million viewers per month worldwide.

"We were the poster child for what went wrong with the Internet back then," he says. "Back then everybody laughed, but I'm glad we held on. The audience is now flocking in huge numbers. We make most of our money in online advertising and merchandising...a lot more than we can make on television. The really cool thing is there is really a good time for the independents again. Back then, you had to deal with four or five gatekeepers, but now you can reach a massive audience directly. And that's fantastic."



# Trust Millions of Kids Who Say French Animation Wins, OK!



20 series  
on air  
in the **USA**  
in 2006



PRESENTED BY

ALPHANIM  
CARRERE GROUP  
DARGAUD DISTRIBUTION  
FUTURIKON  
MARATHON INTERNATIONAL  
MILLIMAGES  
TAFFY ENTERTAINMENT  
TELE IMAGES INTERNATIONAL  
XILAM



AIED ON  
ANIMANIA  
CARTOON NETWORK  
DISNEY CHANNEL  
MTV  
NICKELODEON  
NOGGIN



Visit us at  
**STAND  
02-15**  
MIPCOM 2006



**20,000** programs

Animation & much more to be found @

**www.tvfrance-intl.com**

MADE IN FRANCE  
**TV France**  
International  
MADE FOR SUCCESS

5, rue Cernuschi  
F-75017 Paris  
T. (33 1) 40 53 23 00  
F. (33 1) 40 53 23 01  
[www.tvfrance-intl.com](http://www.tvfrance-intl.com)



## That's President Marty to You

**T**affy Entertainment, the brand managing company for French toon shop MoonScoop and U.S. indie studio Mike Young Productions has upped **Lionel Marty** to president of worldwide distributions. In this newly created position, Marty will lead the TV and video sales team for all of Taffy's kids programming worldwide.

Taffy will debut four new shows at MIPCOM this year: **Fantastic Four** (the much-anticipated 26x26 series produced by Marvel and MoonScoop which airs on Cartoon Network), **SamSam** (a CG-animated preschool show based on a comic book and produced by Bayard Jeunesse Animation in High Def, **Growing Up Creepie** (new 52x11 fall lineup toon co-produced with Mike Young Prods, Discovery Kids, DAG, Story Hat and Sunwoo/Peach Blossom) and **I Got a Rocket!** (52x11 2D-animated series based on a popular Australian picture book by Matt Zurbo and Dean Gorissen). It looks like Marty is going to be awfully busy in Cannes this year!



## Happy Accidents

**O**wls are often relegated to the role of wise sidekicks in movies and kids shows (think *Bambi* or *Winnie the Pooh*, for example). That's not the case with **TV-Loonland's** new CG-animated show called **The Owl**. Co-produced by Paris-based Studio Hari, the toon is created and directed by Alexandre So and it stars a pink disaster-prone owl who has all kinds of horrible things happen to him in each one-minute long episode. "When licensing a new program, broadcasters are increasingly asking for content which goes beyond the traditional TV format and will work on various platforms," says TV-Loonland COO Olivier Dumont. "This is exactly what *The Owl* offers. The series visually stimulating, quick fire humor has an immediate impact, entertaining people from the outset at home or on the move." The word on the street is that the show is a hoot!

TV-Loonland has also closed a deal for a second series of *Little Princess*, with the U.K.'s Five already signed up.



## Space Ghostbusters and a Cavegirl

**I**f you're in the market for a sci-fi animated comedy targeting nine- to 11-year-olds, you should take a look at Cardiff-based Calon's new show **Psi-Five**. The 26x26 series centers on a team of four kids and their cat who are out to save the universe from a crazy collection of aliens and space ghouls. Of course, the kids have all kinds of powers and psychic abilities to help them save the day—and the cat? Well, he's just along for the ride! "It's blatant fun with some delicious cynicism," says Calon's managing director.

Also on Calon's hot list this year is **IG**, a preschool stop-motion comedy about a cute, carefree cave-girl. This pre-historic environment also stars IG's family and animal friends, including Doggy, Monkey Boy, Triple Tog and Birdie. According to press notes, "the show closely reflects a young child's typical world of learning and bitter experience!"



## Generous Messenger

**I**t was high time an intergalactic messenger used his powers to deliver gifts from planet to planet! That's what **RocketBoy**, the star of Indigo Film & TV's new animated (52x11) series spends most of his free time doing, aided by his guard-sheep Toro and some clever robot pals. Targeting the restless five-to-eight-year-old crowd, **RocketBoy & Toro** is produced by Korea's Imagestone and U.K.'s Village Productions and Cosgrove Hall Films with script development by Jimmy Hibbert (*Bob the Builder*). The show has already been presold to the BBC and Ireland's TG4. There's one catch: We have to wait until 2008 until the RocketBoy delivers his toon to our planet.





See us at MIPCOM  
Booth #08.36

# Pororo

## The Little Penguin

- Series : 104 x 7'
- Sing-A-Long : 26 x 3'
- Christmas Special : 70'



© hanarotelecom / OCON / ICONIX / EBS / Miracle

**TFI** **TFI** **H**  
ENTREPRISES

**HACHETTE**  
Jeunesse

**FUJII TELEVISION KIDS ENTERTAINMENT, INC.**

**CASTNET**

**TAKARA TOMY**

**avex-a**

**KIDZ ENTERTAINMENT**

**kanal 1**

**fun**

**EBS**

**cartoonito**

**YOYO TV**

**EBC**  
東森電視公司

**Skyzen**

**Televisa**

**TYCOON**

**RCTI**

**JESS MEDIA**

**星空**

**kids central**

*Crawling Feet*

**ICONIX**  
ENTERTAINMENT

Contact : Iconix Entertainment Co., Ltd. Tel: 822-516-2315 Fax: 822-540-2857 Email: [wjkim@iconix.co.kr](mailto:wjkim@iconix.co.kr)



## Bejuba! Reps Klasky-Csupo Toons

**B**ejuba! Ent. has been tapped to represent two new shows from Klasky-Csupo (*Rugrats*, *Wild Thornberrys*, *Rocket Power*) at this year's market in October. The company will present *Twinkle* and *Sugarless* to international buyers, while Tracy Kramer of Toltec Artists continues his long-term relationship in representing the studio.

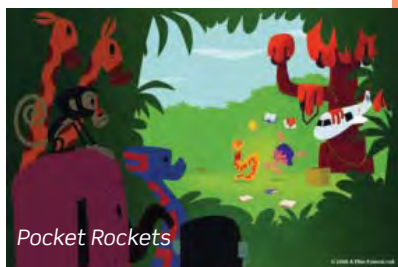
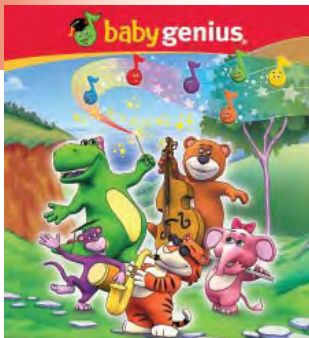
The animated preschool series *Twinkle* centers on a four-year-old girl who doesn't accept adults' explanations of how the world works and always has to find out for herself. Then, whenever she learns something new, she twinkles. *Sugarless* is an animated show about a quirky teenager with attitude who rebels against convention and philosophizes with a unique point of view. The offbeat comedy is animated with CelAction.

Founded by Tatiana Kober in 2003, Bejuba! focuses on bringing production partners together, on closing gap financing and on distribution. The company's client base includes Studio B Prods, Coneybeare Stories, Tandem Films, Cut-Out Films, National Geographic Kids Programming and Production, Snowden Fine, Pork & Beans and ZDFE.

## Genius Deal for B Wooding

**L**.A.-based **B Wooding Media** announced an expansion of its operations to include the international brand management of the **Baby Genius** property recently. "We are delighted to be working with Pacific Entertainment to develop and cultivate the Baby Genius brand for the global marketplace," says Brenda Wooding, managing director of BWM. "We also anticipate positive feedback from the international community regarding the grassroots stages of redefining our company's areas of expertise."

The Baby Genius brand includes over 30 music CDs, 10 animated/live-action titles on audio and DVD as well as a sizeable consumer products campaign with major U.S. stores in 2007. BWM also represents Bardel Entertainment (*Silverwing*, *The Christmas Orange*) and AB Snvesk Industry (*Roofters*).



## A Royal Treat

**A**mberwood Entertainment, Total Eclipse TV and PKJ Music are ready to introduce their queen to the world—that's Hans Christian Andersen's timeless fairy tale, ***The Snow Queen***. BBC Worldwide holds distribution rights to the new 56-minute special which puts live-action actors against stunning CG backgrounds. Jonathan Wiseman, director of sales and marketing at Amberwood notes, "Amberwood is honored to have been part of this amazing production...it's like nothing ever before seen and will be sure to please audiences around the world." The special premiered on the BBC and CBC in December of 2005.



## Biggest Draws at Cartoon Forum

The following animated pitches attracted the most attendees at last month's Cartoon Forum event in Pau:

1. Pocket Rockets (Millimages, Toons N Tales, Millimages U.K.)
2. Bingo Bongo (Lobster, JetMedia, Sofidoc)
3. Jeremy (Futurikon)
4. High Spy (Alphanim)
5. The Annoying Thing (LOGP, Kaktus Films)
6. Ariol (Folimage)
7. Rahan, Son of the Dark Age (Xilam, Castelrosso Films)
8. Farmtastic (Dibulitoon Studio)
9. CDL Intl. Hareport (TeamTo Sarl, Filmweken)
10. Olive's Little Joys (Mare Nostrum)

# Smart is beautiful



## **Harmony**★

Harmony is the leading enterprise animation software solution for studios. Its superior toolset makes it the ideal choice to create high quality animations, for digital, traditional and cut-out animation styles.



## **Opus**★

Opus is the leading enterprise animation software solution for traditional studios. Its commanding toolset makes it a state-of-the-art solution for developing high quality animation.



## **Solo**★

Solo is the leading stand-alone software solution for studios to create high quality animations for film, video, television, games, web sites, mobile devices, training applications. Discover a new level of creativity.



## **Studio**★

Studio is the leading animation software solution for individuals. Ideal for professional animators, hobbyists and schools, Studio is a complete solution for developing high quality animation.



## **Storyboard**★

Storyboard is the leading storyboarding system for visual storytelling for animation and live-action projects. Its advanced toolset is perfect for traditional and paperless methods.

Toon Boom Animation Inc. is the worldwide leader of animation software solutions, carrying entry level and high-end animation software solutions for film, television, web, games, mobile devices and training applications, and providing consulting services related to production workflow and productivity. Toon Boom Animation is committed to delivering quality, efficiency and reliability to the animation community — for all animation styles, formats and users.

**Toon Boom is a 2005 Primetime Emmy® Engineering Award Recipient**



See you at  
» **MIPCOM 2006**  
Booth C1.05



# It's Showtime for Spectra's Triple-Header

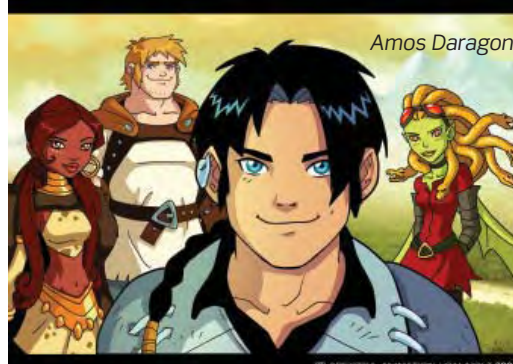
**Y**ou can call Montreal's Spectra Animation a triple threat this season. The toon house seems to have all bases covered with three different projects at the MIPCOM market this month.

First up, there's the arrival of a second season of the studio's popular toon *Toopy and Binoo*. The show has enjoyed a good run on Canada's Treehouse TV and Tele-Quebec and will now go out with a new (78x2) format which will make it more inviting for buyers searching for educational and interstitial content. "These curriculum-based shows will definitely make the show more attractive for U.S. buyers," says Michèle Dal Cin, Spectra's director of international sales and licensing. "You can package these shows as half-hour shows or on their own. They will also have strong interactive components. Kids at home can play along with their computer mouse as Toopy talks to them." Plans are also underway for *Toopy and Binoo* half-hour "mini-movies" which have specific themes such as Halloween and Christmas.

Moving along the age spectrum, company president and producer Andre Bélanger and VP of film and TV division Luc Châtelain have also announced the beginning of production on *Fred's Head*, a 26x22 show, co-produced by French partner Galaxy 7. If you have a jaded, hyper-ironic teen in your household, then you'll definitely recognize the cast of characters in this offbeat offering! Created by Benoit Godbout and Malorie Nault Cousineau, the series centers on a 16-year-old and his eccentric posse of friends and foes as they try to find their places in the grown-up world.

"This is a Flash-animated show

which is done in High Definition (1080i standard)...it has striking illustrations and it's going to look beautiful," says Dal Cin. "We got a lot of requests for the show from buyers at the last market, and we noticed that there was a



big demand for this specific age group now [10- to 14-year-olds]."

Obviously, because the show is targeting a tween-teen audience, there are plans for mobile applications and a



Michèle Dal Cin

snappy website produced by Tribal Nova, which allows browsers to add their own snarky teenage-minded comments to the mix.

The third multi-colored feather in Spectra's hat this year is an epic adventure named *Amos Daragon*, which is based on a series of books by Bryan Perro, which have been enormously popular in Quebec, France, Japan, Germany, Russia and Brazil. "We're developing the project with M6 and Tele-Quebec," says Dal Cin. "It's a magical epic tale which is really a wonderful mélange of all different mythologies."

According to Dal Cin, *Daragon* is quite a well-known figure with young readers in the French-speaking world. The 26x24 show can be seen as a sequel to the 12th book in the series—each episode tells a self-contained story, but there are over-riding quests and arcs that are explored though the whole season. Because *Amos Daragon* has developed a following in Japan, Spectra hopes to attract co-producing parties in the Asian region as well. "We would be open to changing the graphic look of the series to emphasize an anime influence," adds Dal Cin.

Overall, Spectra hopes to strengthen ties with new partners at MIPCOM. "We all know that it's tough to be an independent studio these days," she notes. "Our philosophy is to produce more multi-platform properties. We're not thinking only of television anymore. Although many people in our industry are still unsure about how these new platforms will become profitable, we realize that it's very important to find the right promotional partners to make your projects visible. In any case, good marketing strategies are always an asset." ■

For more info, visit [www.spectra-animation.ca](http://www.spectra-animation.ca)





Originated from  
an Asian Weeping Drama  
“Dae Jang Geum”  
alias “Jewel in the Palace”



SEASON I : 30'\*26eps  
SEASON II : 30'\*26eps



## Executive Suite

# Co-Production in Europe? The Excel File Is History!



by Carlos Biern

For the last five or six years now, we European executive producers in the animation dodge have been really lucky. Since the amount of time dedicated to animation on free-broadcast TV has been essentially insignificant and kids pay channels and video games now rule the roost, we waste much less time haggling with other European producers about where to do our scripts, storyboards, music and the drawings we need to get a cartoon series financed—with the help of subsidies, of course—and then there's the horse-trading that goes into divvying up territories and who's going to get what percentage of the earnings.

It was an arduous and complex task (and, in my case, very boring). You need a French scriptwriter and an Irish scriptwriter. Wait, you also need a Canadian writer. And a Spanish story editor and a famous British actor to do the voice-over of the narrator and an Italian musician... and the 2D color we'll do in France but the other 3D stuff will be done in Canada with a director who, sometimes even during production, is sitting in an office overlooking a Barcelona beach. Now the good thing was, I had a completed series—in only 18 months. I still can't imagine how the translators managed that!

The advantage of all that was that the marvelous production budget in Excel and the subsidy papers were 50 times larger than the Bible and the DVD of the project's promo, which was the most important thing for our audience. Get three or four countries involved, forge a half-way decent reputation with the channels and everybody was happy. If everything works out more or less OK production-wise, you've got partners for future se-

ries. In many cases, however, there was a problem once we saw the final results of this multi-linguistic artistic (or not) conglomeration, forced as it had been to meet unalterable production deadlines (that is, when the audience ratings were accurate in certain European countries, which was not always the case).

That Excel file is dead, and with its demise we producers now have to be what we really are: creators removed from the accounting department. An executive producer (basically the person who drums up the cash and guides a project) now simply spends his time producing much better series, just as good for Europe as they are for Japan, South Korea and the U.S.A. We do

less of them, a lot less, but our series now have a unique visual allure and a more global, universal and direct narrative sense. The audience rules—on TV, in shorts or with videogames.

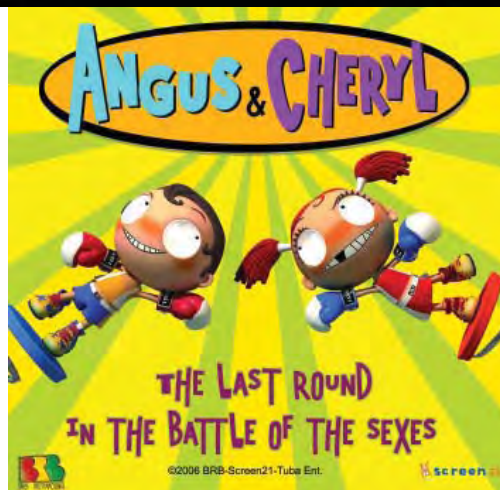
The European countries still maintaining a certain liveliness vis-à-vis the forging of creators are still France, England, Germany, Spain (basically Catalonia) and Italy. Whatever continent you hail from, you can (and should) coproduce with Europe. Seek out the big producers in each country and try to see how you could work with them. There's support, there's creativity, audiences and assistance. That said, you can also be sure that, in most cases, your European co-producer will want the final word on scripts and

design. After all, we're basically artists.

We look for new ways to entertain and make people laugh through animation. Whether it's for kids, teens or whoever. Lots of times we're criticized for being too adult-like in certain situations or boring with the pacing of our scripts. We used to spend much more time agonizing over some background lighting or a character's

color line than over the story itself... but things are changing. There are new generations of creators, designers and scriptwriters born in the late '70s and early '80s who have drunk from the well of manga and indie movie scripts and who are on their PSPs and ipods around the clock. They are the ones moving the world of animation in Europe. I've tossed my Excel sheets—Excel is for accountants. ■

Carlos Biern is executive producer at Spanish studio BRB Internacional/Screen 21. His current slate includes *Khudayana*, *Iron Kid*, *Bernard*, *The Imp*, *Angus & Cheryl*, *The Invisible Man* and *Papawa*.







NIPCOM 2006  
No. 05-26  
33-4-9299-8271

30 min.  
52 eps.

**Shoot BAKUGAN and battle for the EARTH!**

© SEGA TOYS / SPIN MASTER / BAKUGAN PROJECT

**ims**  
ENTERTAINMENT, LTD.

**For further licensing information, please contact:**

**TOKYO OFFICE:**  
8th Fl, Shinwa Bldg,  
3-2-4, Nishi-Shinjuku, Shinjuku-ku,  
Tokyo 160-0023 Japan  
Phone : 81-3-5325-9199  
F a x : 81-3-5325-1529

**LOS ANGELES OFFICE:**  
15760 Ventura Blvd., Suite 700,  
Encino, CA91436 U.S.A.  
Phone : 1-818-905-8881  
F a x : 1-818-905-0815

**PARIS OFFICE:**  
28 Rue Godefroy Cavaignac,  
75011 Paris, FRANCE  
Phone : 33-1-4379-7042  
F a x : 33-1-4379-7064



# The Myth of Vanishing Artists

Is there really a shortage of qualified storyboard artists around the world? Our ace reporter looks at some of the factors that may be causing this trend. **by Chris Grove**

If you're a storyboard artist who wants to live the vida loca, head for Vancouver, Canada or Bristol, England. And soon. For a number of reasons, none of them crazy, all of them quite rational, there's a shortage of talent in those two places (and, it should be mentioned, in other parts of the world as well) and that can only mean one thing: more money and better benefits.

"The last 18 months have been busier than ever," says Keri Bosch, head hiring honcho at Vancouver-based Studio B Productions (*George of the Jungle*, *Being Ian*, *The Amazing Adrenalini Brothers*, *Pucca*, *Class of the Titans* and others). "Staffing projects has become a big challenge." Particularly, she goes on to note, in the storyboard department. Because the position of storyboard artist is hardly an entry-level job, college and art school animation programs can't fill the gap. In the fast-moving children's TV end of the animation business, the storyboarder often functions as the de facto director of the show.

In large measure, Studio B's problem is a good example of the law of unintended consequences. In the last five years, digital animation technologies have made it possible for the studio to repatriate a lot of its once-outsourced work. "We use a number of software applications including Maya and After Effects, but the majority is done in Flash," says Studio B

general manager and chief financial officer Rob Simmons. "We've also developed in-house sophisticated production management applications that manage workflow in a way that allows us to have distant vendors and partners be a direct part of the creative process." Prior to 2001, 100% of Studio B's series animation was done in Asia. "Now, we do 80% of our volume digitally, and half of that is done in-house at Studio B," Simmons says. Overall, says Chris Bartleman, partner of Studio B, there's a huge appetite for children's programming at the moment. "Especially in light of all of the new delivery systems available, it's a great time to be in this business," Bartleman says. "But we're always prepared for change. We're strapped in and not getting off this roller coaster any time soon."

Meanwhile, overseas in Blighty, the situation is just as tough for the folks

at Aardman Animations Ltd., (*Wallace & Gromit: The Curse of the Were-Rabbit*, *Chicken Run*, *Creature Comforts*). Currently working on this year's TV workload of 59 half-hour shows, finding the right talent requires a lot of digging, reports Aardman head of broadcast and development, Miles Bullough. And, as with his colleagues in Western Canada: "We're having a really hard time finding storyboard artists." Or at least, ones who can make the grade at one of the hottest animation shops in the world.

When the company puts potential hires through their paces, they often find that candidates rarely have all three qualities the company prizes. They can be great draftsmen and great at staging.

But Bullough says the rub is: "Can they tell a great story?" And for that, training can only go so far. As with good directors or writers, one either

has talent or one doesn't. The ability to describe a scene in pictures that makes the story clear to the audience, for example, can only be taught to a point. So too, the ability to understand the intention of a scene, what characters are thinking and feeling, and in the case of most Aardman products, the ability to be funny. "Developing a pipeline of talent is going to take a couple of years," says Bullough. "You can't just turn on a tap."



Miles Bullough



Fred Seibert



Chris Bartleman



*Creature Comforts*



## BEING IAN

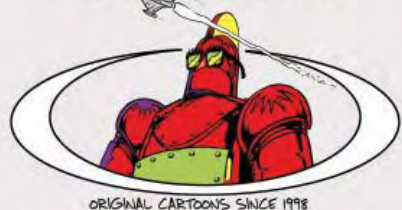
Studio B's *Being Ian* and *George of the Jungle*



Aardman's *Shaun the Sheep*



## FREDERATOR



ORIGINAL CARTOONS SINCE 1998

If you *can* make the grade and get a contract with either Studio B or Aardman, the talent shortfall makes the storyboarders' lot something of a seller's market with respect to compensation. In the British animation industry, storyboard artists often make as little as £650 a week. Some execs contact-

Wow! Wow! Wubzy!



Benefits are a good thing, says Bosch. Above all else, especially in the case of top creative shops, there is the lure of working on high-profile shows with high-profile directors. "Paying people well is a key component of getting the best talent," says Bosch. But there are other intangibles, such as working at a

supply is a little tighter than last year," says Fred Siebert, president of Frederator Studios. "But from my slightly jaundiced point of view, it's not much different than it ever was. It's always hard to find really good people."

In addition to overseeing the creation of many Nickelodeon hits (*Fairly OddParents*, *ChalkZone*, *My Life As a Teenage Robot* and the new fall hit *Wow! Wow! Wubzy!*), Siebert has a storied past launching brands such as MTV, VH-1 and Nickelodeon itself. He is also the mastermind behind *Random! Cartoons* (a new anthology of shorts which serves as a talent incubator) and *ReFederator* podcasts. So he knows of what he speaks.

Frederator does things differently than mainstream studios. In a way, Siebert's perspective is different than that of Studio B et. al. "Everything we do is tagged to a filmmaker not a concept," says Siebert. "It's always easier to find people who can ape a style rather than contribute style. Just as an above average actor has an innate ability to inhabit the characters he plays, hiring a storyboard artists who can inhabit the idea of the artists is, and always will be, easier said than done." ■

**"Developing a pipeline of talent is going to take a couple of years. You can't just turn on a tap."**

—Miles Bullough, Aardman Studio's head of broadcast and development

ed for the story say that in the current labor market, a talented storyboarder could get up to £1000 per week, plus benefits at a top studio.

Meanwhile, in Canada at Studio B, Bosch says that salary isn't the most important element in capturing and retaining talent from project to project.

place that lets people have a life. "You don't have to be here 16 hours a day until crunch time," she says. *And* you can bring your dog to work.

Anecdotal evidence of a storyboard artist shortage notwithstanding, at least one industry veteran says he's kind of seen this all before. "The labor



# Take My Parents, Please!

It's hard to resist the charms of Disney Channel's *The Replacements*—a clever new show with a killer premise, hip character designs and madcap situations!

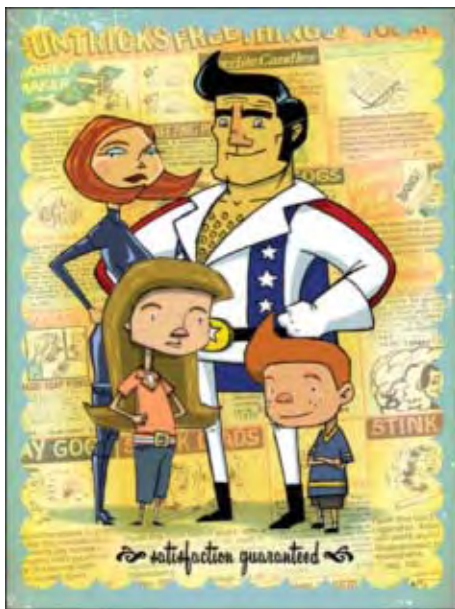
Children's author and illustrator Dan Santat had a great idea one day as he was cleaning up his art studio and came across some old comic books. He saw one of those ads where you could order whoopee cushions and x-ray goggles and thought what would happen if kids could actually order a cooler set of parents from an agency. "I thought about this kid who's fed up with his parents making him follow their rules, and one day he actually gets to order cooler parents—like a wrestler dad and a cowgirl mom," recalls Santat. "Of course, in the end, he learns a lesson that your parents may be hard on you, but they wish the best for you even though they might not be what you perceive as cool."

Flashforward several years later, and Santat found himself pitching a show around town based on that very idea. Although the premise evolved through the development process, his idea inspired one of the season's more original new comic toons—*The Replacements*, which premiered last month on Disney Channel. Exec produced by Jack Thomas (*The Fairly OddParents*) and directed by Heather Martinez (*SpongeBob SquarePants*), the 2D animated show follows the adventures of orphan siblings Riley and Todd who end up with a British spy mom called

Agent K, a daredevil dad and a smart-alecky talking spy car called C.A.R.T.E.R. The kids also discover that they can switch any grown-up in their world by

calling Conrad Fleem, owner of a mysterious company named Fleemco. The show's A-list voice cast includes Nancy Cartwright (Todd), Grey Delisle (Riley), Kath Soucie (Agent K), Daran Norris (Dick Daring) David McCallum (C.A.R.) and Lauren Tom (Tasumi).

"The funny thing is you see the storyboard animatics and you think, 'Wow that's



cool," says Santat. "Then they add the music, the voices and the sounds, and you think that you can't possibly get any more excited. You get this surreal feeling when they put up the website and you think to yourself, 'Wow—am I really seeing this?'"

Santat believes that there's a lot in store for the adults who watch the show as well. "I can't recall another show like this that offers the kids the opportunity to push the adults around. Usually, in similar situations, there's a kid with a superstar. He can play with the big boys. Ben 10, for example, has the wristband with powers—he can fight the evil super

forces, but he's still a kid!"

Thomas, a former stand-up comic who cut his teeth in animation on Butch Hartman's *The Fairly OddParents*, says he thinks the

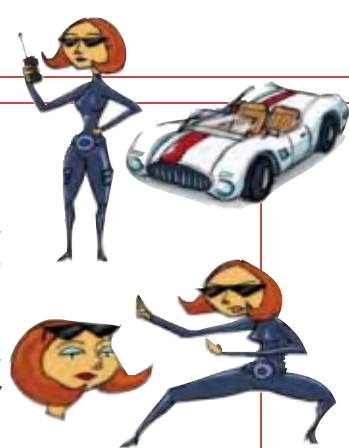
show has all the ingredients of a great comedy. "I'm really pleased with all the comic elements, the storylines, the great characters," says Thomas. "We really like to come up with material that will appeal to kids and their parents—just like a lot of the shows I grew up with."

Both Thomas and Santat also believe that the cartoony traditionally animated style of the show is a throwback to some of the classic toons of the past 30 years. "The bulk of the animation is done at Toon City in Taiwan," says Santat. "At one point, we were contemplating doing the show in Flash, but the producers really wanted to stay true to the hand-painted style of my illustrations."

Besides seeing his first TV idea become a hot toon property this fall, Santat is continuing to illustrate Rhea Perlman's *Otto Undercover* kids' adventure series for Harper Collins. As if all that doesn't keep him busy enough, he is still holding on to his day job at Santa Monica-based videogame company Treyarch.

So what words of wisdom does he have for all those bushy-tailed art school and animation students? "I got the best advice from one of my Art Center's advertising teachers, Roy Young. He told us, 'You either want to suck the worst or be the best and different from all the others. Nobody remembers the person who did the thing in the middle.' When I was in art school, everybody wanted to draw the best-looking car or the best-looking characters. Nobody talked about the characters' histories. The image was first and the story was secondary. What I believe now, is that story should always come first. Remember that form should always follow function." Now discuss that as you order yourselves a new set of parents. ■

**The Replacements airs Saturdays at 8 p.m. on The Disney Channel.**





26 X 30 min  
78 X 7 min  
10 X 2 min  
as on ABC, YTV, ITV &  
Cartoon Network

**The Amazing Aardvark Brothers!**

24 X 3 min  
as on CBEERIES

**Bonny Banana Mo**

26 X 11 min  
as on CPAC

**Like a Ball**

phone: +44 7769 747 125  
sales@bejuba.com

**Bejuba!**  
entertainment

Come see us  
at stand  
04.11

CUT-OUT ANIMATION CO. PESKY 4KIDS AAP

# They Don't Read Animation Magazine!



## Aren't you glad you do?

**ANIMATION  
MAGAZINE**

AND

[WWW.ANIMATIONMAGAZINE.NET](http://WWW.ANIMATIONMAGAZINE.NET)

YOUR ONE-STOP DESTINATIONS FOR TIMELY ARTICLES, IN-DEPTH PROFILES  
AND ANIMATION-RELATED NEWS STORIES.

## DON'T LET THE TOON BUS PASS YOU BY!

TO ORDER HOLIDAY GIFT SUBSCRIPTIONS, CALL 818-991-2884  
OR EMAIL [CIRC@ANIMATIONMAGAZINE.NET](mailto:CIRC@ANIMATIONMAGAZINE.NET)



# Feeding a Global Long-Form Appetite

More indie players have their eyes on feature-length animated projects at this year's MIPCOM market.

by Thomas J. McLean

Navigating the animation business is difficult at the best of times, but as the major studios step up their feature efforts, independent producers have to be even more nimble and creative to get their efforts seen on screens both big and small.

Independent animation has largely been confined to the TV and direct-to-DVD markets—especially for feature-length projects. But with the overall resurgence in animation and the success last year of *Hoodwinked*—the independent animated feature that topped the box office upon its release in theaters by The Weinstein Co. earlier this year—the potential for theatrical releases is growing, even as the DVD market becomes increasingly crowded and difficult to crack.

“The market has polarized between big-budget features only a studio can support and the DVD market,” says Seth Willenson, an independent producer and industry consultant with a quarter century of experience with independent animation. “(*Hoodwinked*) had the benefit of having a company that is extremely effective with their promotions and marketing,” says Willenson.

Whether more toons follow in the footsteps of *Hoodwinked* remains to be seen, but it did prove independents could do well theatrically. “The next year will tell,” says Delna Bhesania, CEO of Vancouver-based Bardel Entertainment, which is bringing several feature-length toon such as *Dragons: The Metal Ages*, *Dragons: Fire and Ice* as well as the award-winning holiday special, *The Christmas Orange* to the market.

Fernando Szew, COO and Managing Director of Marvista, says theatrical release is primarily a promotional tool the

company will use for upcoming titles *Romeo & Juliet: Sealed with a Kiss* and *Attila and the Great Blue Bean*. “They go to perhaps smaller theaters, and it’s just a way of building brand awareness in a family outing that hopefully will translate into greater DVD sales,” he says.

It’s crucial for independent features looking for theatrical release to find partners that can help fund production and get the widest release possible. Even though it is primarily a television market, the upcoming MIPCOM in Cannes is a chance to explore financing and distribution partnerships.

Rick Mischel, CEO of Vancouver-based Mainframe Entertainment (which has titles such as *Tony Hawk in Boom Boom Sabotage* and *Arthur’s Missing Pal* at MIPCOM this year) says strong distribution in the U.S. is crucial when trying to sell to foreign markets. “You’re going to have to try to get a major or a mini-major in the U.S. to have a shot internationally,” he says.

Few execs say they think the growing number of major studios making CG-animated toons constricts their market. “It’s a different niche,” says Szew. “The majors are created almost exclusively as blockbusters.”

European theaters have long shown

will stay as a niche as opposed to being swallowed up by the big budgets and big marketing dollars of the majors,” he says.

Cracking those markets can at times be difficult, however, as homegrown productions that often receive local subsidies can quickly fill the demand for animated features, Szew says.

While some foreign independent toons can crack the U.S. market, not every such title makes the cut. For every *Doogal*—a film based on a popular European children’s show released earlier this year by The Weinstein Co.—there’s an *Asterix* that fails to interest American audiences. “I see probably eight to 10 features a year that get produced in the international market that have actually no market in the U.S.,” says Willenson.

Executives differ in their diagnosis of the health of the domestic and foreign DVD markets, but all agree that standing out in the increasingly crowded market is more difficult. The single most difficult thing to do is establish a



Delna Bhesania



Fernando Szew



Rick Mischel



Adam Shaheen

**“The direct-to-DVD market is brand-conscious; you need to have pre-existing brands for it to work.”**

— Rick Mischel, CEO of Mainframe Entertainment

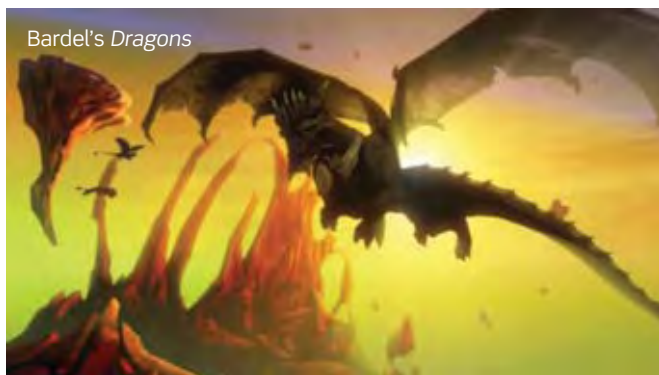
independent animated features, with Spain, France, Belgium and the U.K. the current hotbeds for such films.

Szew says Marvista also has seen a niche for independent toons develop in Latin America. “Hopefully, this niche

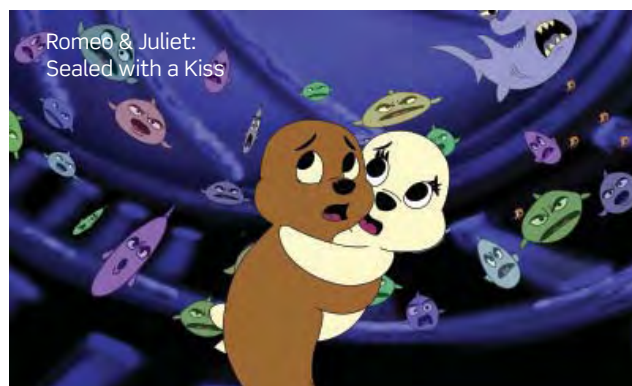
new property.

“The direct-to-DVD market is brand conscious, you need to have pre-existing brand consciousness for it to work,” says Mischel. “An original property won’t work on just direct-to-DVD. It has

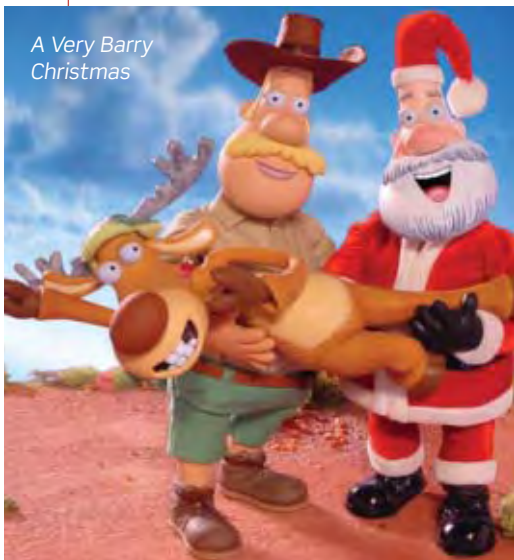
Bardel's Dragons



Romeo & Juliet:  
Sealed with a Kiss



A Very Barry  
Christmas



Tony Hawk in Boom Boom Sabotage



to have some pre-existing awareness behind it."

"It's very difficult to create a market for a new intellectual property because the intellectual property has to break through on a national level to sell through," agrees Willenson.

The best way to establish those brands is to stick to the traditional route of establishing a property as a TV series, basing the story on a pre-established property such as a comic book or well-known fairy tale, or to fill a specific niche such as the religious audience or holiday specials.

The latter worked for Cuppa Coffee, a Toronto-based animation house that sold the original TV special *A Very Barry Christmas* to markets around the world. CEO Adam Shaheen says the special performed so well that broadcasters instantly backed the idea of more content starring the same characters. Cuppa Coffee has turned that interest into plans for a

feature, which is in preproduction as the company seeks partners to help finance the project.

Willenson says one of his projects is a direct-to-DVD project called *At Jesus' Side*, about an anthropomorphic dog who observes the life of Jesus. The project is targeted at the Christian market. "It really is a function of the property itself and marketing," he says.

Overseas, DVD remains a strong performer as the technology is still growing in many regions of the world. There also are new formats to consider, such as Blu-Ray and HD-DVD that will revitalize markets as consumers adopt the new technology.

Television remains a tough market in the U.S. for animated features. "There really aren't a lot of places you can sell it to," Willenson says. "Cartoon Network is the only channel running a feature slot, but they don't pay a lot of money."

And while new platforms such as cell phones and video on demand are the

buzz of the industry, most execs say the economic models to support those technologies have yet to develop. Szew, for one, says such platforms "still haven't demonstrated themselves to be a powerful generator of revenue."

Most execs remain upbeat about the market and its strength around the world. "Overall, I think the animation industry is going through another up spurt," says Bhesania. "There's more activity in what people are buying. It definitely feels a lot busier in the market."

"The markets are strong everywhere," says Mischel. "It's not like the old days of huge license fees, but you're not in a place where one particular territory is downtrodden." ■

**Thomas J. McLean is a Los Angeles-based journalist who specializes in animation, visual effects and comic books. You can read his Bags and Boards blog at [http://weblogs.variety.com/bags\\_and\\_boards](http://weblogs.variety.com/bags_and_boards)**



## The Padded Cel

# MIPCOM Myths Debunked: The Truth Behind Cannes' Urban Legends



by Robby London

**N**o question about it: MIPCOM has a mystique. Ostensibly it is just a convention at which television programs—including animation—are bought and sold. But the famous hotels and restaurants, the outrageous entrepreneurial stunts and shenanigans, the decadent parties and steamy affairs—all set against dreamy pastels of the Cote d'Azur—have spawned a mythology uniquely its own. Culminating years of research, in-depth interviews with “deep throat” sources—augmented by highly dangerous undercover journalism sometimes employing disguises (note item below on transvestites)—*The Padded Cel* unearths the truth behind some of MIPCOM's most prevalent myths:

**Walt Disney is cryogenically frozen under the Palais.** False! Once, while taking that secret elevator from the “bunker” up to G-level, I ended up lost in the bowels of the Palais for several days. No Walt. But I did notice a cryogenic unit in preparation for Michael Eisner. (For those of you too young to remember, he was the former head of Disney.)

**Convenient low-cost lodging is available.** This one's true!! Most people are unaware of the great hotel bargains to be had a mere four-hour shuttle bus ride away in Juan de... Marseilles. Plus, if you'd prefer the personal touch of bed and breakfast, many of the French mob families in Marseilles have agreed to open their homes to MIPCOM delegates. Cash only. English-language ransom notes upon request.

**Attending MIPCOM adds two inches to your waistline.** Not if you're a seller it won't! You'll automatically work off every last

pound of rich sauces by getting on and off your knees every half hour and groveling. I always return home weighing less!

**The Palais floor plan exists in a Euclidean universe.** Actually, M.I.T. cosmologists are designing a comprehensive research study of the Palais to ascertain whether it is, in fact, a wormhole to an alternate universe. Reed-Midem has agreed to allow a

drink money!

**Latest miracle fitness gadget: the MIPCOM guidebook?** It's true! Surely you've seen those infomercials where flabby TV execs get in shape in mere days simply by hauling around the MIPCOM book (aka “MIPCOM MIRACLE MUSCLE-IZER!”). You just know *someone's* getting rich... (besides the airlines—on excess baggage charges.)

**“All we need is 10% of the budget and we're fully-funded!”** You'll hear this from producers—and it's technically true, with only this slight caveat: all they need is 10% of the budget – from each of nine different territories.

**The Palais has a roof.** If you believe this myth, you obviously were not in the Riviera Village during The Great Deluge a year ago. Several deals were consummated on rubber rafts in Class 4 rapids. Unfortunately, the only one who lived to finalize the contracts was some dude named Noah.

**Transvestite prostitutes work the Croisette in the evenings.** How did THIS one get started? Absolutely not! There are no transvestites on the streets at night! They are all safely tucked away in the rooms

of execs from the Family Values Network. (Please don't ask me how I learned this.)

(Note: If you have more myths you would like investigated, please forward them care of *La Guest House Corleone* in Marseilles.) ■

**When he's not working on developing animated properties, Robby London often acts as tour guide for British actor Hugh Grant during his frequent visits to Los Angeles.**

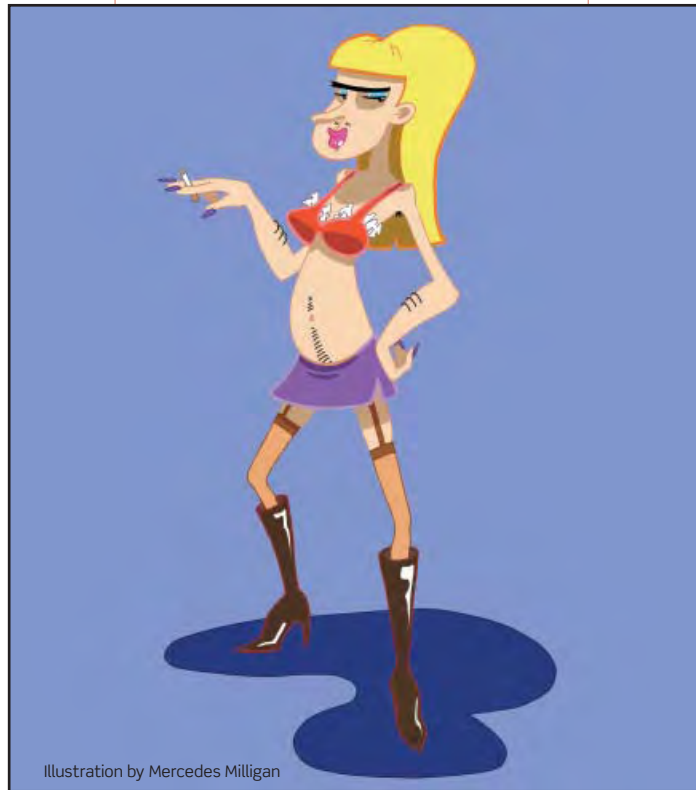


Illustration by Mercedes Milligan

probe to be launched in the C-wing in 2009.

**Drinks at the Majestic at 6 p.m.** Has anyone ever witnessed a waiter actually *accept a drink order* in the late afternoon at the Majestic? Not that it matters anyway, since the chances of finding the person you were supposed to meet are roughly equivalent to running into each other at a World Cup match. The good news? You can fund your show with what you saved in



# Chicaloca™

*It's wild time, Chicaloca.*

Character Name : Chicaloca

Character Concept : Sexy, Stylish, Self-confident

Development Status :

200 Images and Video Clips developed.

Products : Notes, Diaries, Postcards, Albums,  
Bags, Ties, Scarves, Cushions,  
Nail Tips, Watches, Swimming Suits, Umbrellas

product name : My life style



Always Cool!  
**Project109**

3F K-Bldg., 408-27 Seokyo-dong, Mapo-gu, Seoul, Republic of Korea

★ Tel : +82 2 334 6997 (#202) ★ E-mail : [dhkim@project109.net](mailto:dhkim@project109.net) (Dohee Kim, Overseas Marketing Manager)

[www.chicaloca.com](http://www.chicaloca.com)



# Young, Fast and Brilliant

Will success ruin Brendan Burch and his dedicated team of Flash artists at L.A.'s Six Point Harness studio? We think not!

**Y**ou're not alone if you think that the best part of the 2004 comedy *Eurotrip* was its clever animated title sequence. That memorable project, along with MTV2's edgy toon *Where My Dogs At?* and this season's Noggin hit *Wow! Wow! Wubbzy!* are the handiwork of Brendan Burch and his talented team at Hollywood-based Six Point Harness Studios. The three-year-old shop is fast becoming the go-to spot for productions seeking quality Flash-animated projects, and although Burch and company are working long days to meet their many deadlines, they're definitely not complaining.

"When we started out, we knew that Flash was the biggest thing," says the 27-year-old Burch. "We knew Flash better than everybody else back then and we had a very efficient pipeline. We actually didn't realize that there was going to be such a huge demand for Flash-animated TV shows then, but not a lot of people did Flash and we were one of the few independent shops who specialized in it. We actually started in two studio apartments in 2003. We had so many machines plugged in that we were blowing breakers left and right! We moved to our new studio space by the end of 2004."

After graduating from CalArts, Burch rode the tail end of the dot-com wave and landed a job at Atom Films. Later, he met animation director Greg Franklin when they both worked on Romp Films' animated movie *Jake's Booty Call*. "After the project ended, we realized that this pool of talent was never going to be pulled together again," says Burch. "That's when we decided to start the company and polish the production methods that we had used during the film."

The *Eurotrip* opener, which was an excellent parody of an airline safety manual, really fired up the company's engines. The studio's animated title sequence for Fox's *Phil Hendrie* pilot was another big attention-grabber. Before long, they had worked on pilots for Warner Bros. and Klasky Csupo, finished a spot for *Drew Carey's Green Screen* show and

had a series called *Seeing-Eye Dog* optioned by Disney TV Animation.

In addition to service work, Burch and his team are working on several original properties under the Tire Fire Films banner. Matt Danner and Michael Diaz head up the division, which has catchy Flash-animated shows such as *Rednecks in Space*, *Claw Dad*, *Twincesses* and *Neenjaa* on its plate. "We have a pretty robust development slate," says Burch. "We'll have six shows by the end of the year."

"We do our pre-production work in Illustrator and generate a lot of drawings on pencil and paper," adds Burch. "We're slowly switching to [Wacom] Cintiq tablets. We also work heavily in After Effects. We treat the Flash really well."

So what does Burch predict for the future of the business? "I don't see people not wanting 2D animation anytime soon," he notes. "There's always going to be a demand for 2D. We're in a good position because everyone's moving toward a digital media world, and we've been in the forefront of that. Flash show budgets, however, are higher than some expect. That bar of quality comes at a price."

Of course, we have to ask him about that name—where the heck did Six Point Harness come from? It turns out that one night, after having one too many drinks with friends, Burch decided to get a name for his future



company—something that had to do with seatbelts and safety... so he came up with Five Point Harness (a seatbelt device worn in practicing). When he discovered that the web domain was already taken, he settled for Six Point Harness! "It sort of stuck with us," says Burch.

"We wanted to say, 'Hey, you're safe with us!'"

One objective that seems high on Burch's list of priorities is keeping the studio's work environment artist-friendly and fun. "Our biggest challenge may be keeping the lights on, and yes, it's a business, and it keeps getting bigger and bigger, and the stakes are higher than ever before," he notes. "But we like to keep Six Point a creative haven. Our group is a young team and we fit within the demographics for our clients [such as Spike TV and MTV]. We all love cartoons and we know everyone who knows cartoons! It's a pretty small community. The smartest thing I ever did was surround myself with the smartest people I knew. We want to become the next Pixar. We want our studio to be a magical place ... to be a rocketship to the moon." ■

For more info, visit [www.sixpointharness.com](http://www.sixpointharness.com)



Brendan Burch









# Hot to Trot

DIC hopes its new toon *Horseland* will deliver a picture-perfect finish in this fall's competitive TV race.

**D**IC Animation's *Horseland* may be as close as a sure thing as we have in this fall's TV derby. Not only is it loosely based on an existing website with 2.4 million registered users, it features one of the species most adored by young girls. Centering on five girls, two boys and their horses at an equestrian school, the 26x30 series is a traditionally animated project, which also has a sprinkling of CG effects (for instances involving scenes of rain or fire, for example).

Because the horses and the other animals in the stable can talk when the humans aren't around, *Horseland* will definitely not be a weekly re-enactment of the Dakota Fanning-starring movie *Dreamer*! The show's writers mix humor with subtle lessons about compassion, honesty, teamwork and the art of getting along.

"Although the show has a lot of educational and informational content, we also wanted it to be fun and entertaining," says Mike Maliani, DIC Entertainment's chief creative officer and the show's exec producer. "It's really not your typical animated show aimed at girls, although it's close to our animat-

ed *Sabrina* series in tone and look. We have the animals talking when the humans aren't around. We also open and close each episode with a Greek chorus of three animals—Teeny the Pig, Angora the Cat and Shep the Border Collie—discussing the storylines. We also don't show any of the grown-ups in the show. You only see them from the waist down [from the kids' P.O.V.]."

The bulk of the 2D animation for the show (which is digitally painted) is done by China's Hong Ying Universe company, while the CGI effects are added by Hyper Image studio in Los Angeles. "We don't have a typical house look at DIC," adds Maliani.

"If you look at all the shows we've done through our 25-year history, you'll notice that they don't look alike." He illustrates this point by a quick mention of DIC's better-known shows—from *Madeline* and *Sabrina: The Animated Series* to *Sherlock Holmes in the 22nd Century*, *Inspector Gadget*, *Trollz* and *Strawberry Shortcake*.

The DIC toon that *Horseland* most resembles in tone and look is *Sabrina: The Animated Series*. "We do look color and we like clean, crisp designs," says



Maliani, who has been a key part of the DIC team for over two decades. He says what sets the show apart is the care with which the characters are developed and drawn (both the kids and the animals) and the gentle lessons they teach the viewers.



Mike Maliani



Andy Heyward

*Horseland* is the animated centerpiece of the new CBS/DIC/AOL programming block which premiered last month in the U.S. The three-hour E/I-compliant branded program also includes *Madeline*, *Sabrina: The Animated Series* and *Trollz* as well as two live-action offerings *CAKE* and *Dance Revolution*, all targeting kids ages six through 12.

"This block offers a tremendous opportunity to apply our experience in producing and distributing quality kids' series to programming a rich schedule that we believe offers an unprecedented viewing experience," says DIC chairman Andy Heyward.

Viewers can expect a big *Horseland* merchandising blitz as well as a revamped and re-designed online presence for the property, which allows fans to buy, adopt and trade their equine pals at will. In the words of one industry veteran, it all makes perfect horse sense!

—Ramin Zahed

DIC's *Horseland* airs Saturdays at 9:30 a.m. on CBS as part of KOL's Secret Slumber Party.

# COMIC ACTION ADVENTURE TV SERIES

## Giant's Friend



MIPCOM Booth : 8.36-10.35

**SAMG**  
ANIMATION & ENTERTAINMENT

**TIMOON**  
ANIMATION

**Contact** | For USA & Asia Harry Yoon : [yoona119@samg.net](mailto:yoona119@samg.net) 82-2-11-9723-5878 / SAMG (Korea)  
For Europe & Others Marianne Michel : [marianne@timoonanimation.com](mailto:marianne@timoonanimation.com) 33-1-53-95-19-22 / TIMOON (France)

Copyright © 2006 SAMG, TIMOON Animation. All rights reserved.





## Medieval Magic

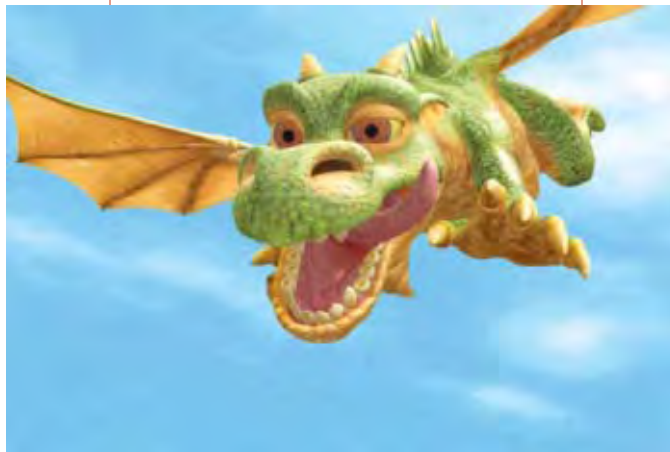
Weta Workshop lends its award-winning vfx expertise to *Jane and the Dragon*, Nelvana's charming adaptation of Martin Baynton's children's book series. **by Ramin Zahed**

One of the sweet last-minute surprises of the fall TV season was the addition of the much-anticipated mo-cap/CG-animated series *Jane and the Dragon* to the qubo/NBC/Telemundo Saturday morning lineup. Produced by Toronto-based Nelvana, this meticulously crafted children's series relies on the vfx expertise of Richard Taylor and his talented team at New Zealand's Weta Workshop. It's the six-time-Oscar-winning studio's first foray into the world of children's television after its astonishing work on Peter Jackson's *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy and last year's *King Kong* epic.

Offering a refreshing role-reversal take on all the old medieval tales, the series centers on a young girl living in the royal court, who ends up being trained as a knight in the king's guard instead of following the more traditional route of becoming a lady-in-waiting. Throughout her many adventures, Jane is accompanied by a helpful green dragon who

happens to live in her backyard.

Development work on the property started over four years ago when the books' author Martin Baynton came to Weta to try his hand at children's TV production. Since Taylor and his partner, Tania, were also looking for an ideal project in the same genre, it was truly a partnership made in kids' TV heaven.



"We spent 18 months designing and creating the look of Jane's world," says Taylor. "We had to figure out how to bring Martin's beautiful illustrations out of his original books into the world of

3D." Many of Weta's senior staff who had worked on *The Lord of the Rings* movies began working on the show. "Many people are surprised when we tell them that we did more illustration work for *Jane* than we did for the entire *Rings* movies," he says with a laugh.

Under the supervision of Trevor Brymer, the *Jane* crew worked diligently to make sure that the finished show retained the storybook quality of the books. "The book has been on the New Zealand bestseller list for 16 or 17 years," says Taylor. "We spent an enormous amount of time doing research into the architecture and living conditions of the people from that period. We realized fully that if we didn't capture the magical feel and authenticity of the books, we would fall short of our promise to Martin and the many young fans of the series."

Weta went to Nelvana, the Toronto-based shop with a solid track record in children's series (from *Backyardigans* and *Babar* to *Franklin* and *Rolie Polie Olie*) to secure financing and distribution of the series worldwide.

"What grabbed my attention from the start was the show's incredible sense of character and quality of animation," says Scott Dyer, Nelvana's exec VP and general manager. "My first reaction was, 'Wow, this looks like a feature film.' We really felt like we had stumbled upon gold. It's astounding to see how realistic the show's CG animation is today. The show has found an audience in Canada already and we're very excited that's part of the launch of the new qubo/Telemundo/NBC programming."

To create the show's unique visual style, the Weta team relied on the same motion-capture technology they'd per-



Scott Dyer



Richard Taylor



fectured in *The Lord of the Rings* and *King Kong*. “Motion capture was our way of initially driving the basic performances,” says Taylor. “We had directors directing five major cast members, and they can see the drama unfold in real time. After shooting this interaction between the characters, key-frame artists take over

spider-like hanger isolates the motion-capture cameras and insulates it from motions in the building and the effects of wind and other weather conditions.”

It takes the team about two weeks to capture 26 minutes of animation and about four weeks to deliver a show (including animation and post). As is the

verse. He says, “We treat the characters as real people with real day-to-day dramas and children seem to identify with them immensely.”

After all is said and done, Taylor and his team are proudest of the fact that their maiden voyage to the mysterious world of children’s television has been a show with a great message and unique storylines delivered with exquisite visual panache. “When we embarked on this project, many people were surprised that children’s TV is an odd direction for me and the Workshop to go in after experiencing the dizzying heights of *Rings*, *Narnia* and *Kong*,” says Taylor. “However, if we ever wanted a greater challenge, we got it in the world of children’s TV. Without question, children are the most critical audience you could ever work for, and there couldn’t be a more rewarding career decision than to enter the rewarding, stimulating world of children’s entertainment.” ■

***Jane and the Dragon* airs at noon on NBC, at 5 p.m. on the i Network and at 8:30 a.m. on Telemundo as part of the qubo block.**

“Many are surprised when we tell them that we did more illustration work for *Jane and the Dragon* than we did for the entire [*Lord of the*] *Rings* movies.”

— Richard Taylor, director of Weta Workshop

and the animation process begins. We used animation to get the facial expressions, the hands, the fingers and the feet right. We’ve developed an in-house facial animation system that we run off a wireless game console. The dragon is completely key-framed.”

To help bring the medieval world to mo-cap life, a nearby ice cream factory was converted to a giant studio. “Our computer room is actually part of the ice cream freezer,” reveals Taylor. A huge

case with many toon and vfx houses these days, Maya is the house animation software of choice.

Taylor praises his animation design team for crafting a believable range of motion for the characters. Going against the common prejudices about mo-cap used in the toon universe, he says the Weta crew was able to develop truth of movement for the mo-cap-generated images and move the show’s aesthetic from the tech-side back the human uni-



# Wheels, Deals and Dolls

## The Latest from the Licensing World

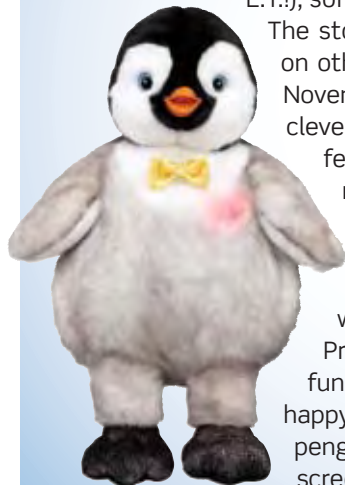
### Happy Feet Dances with Build-A-Bear

It's not just your imagination: Penguins are everywhere these days. The latest example of this trend is Warner Bros. Consumer Products' **Happy Feet** venture with the **Build-A-Bear Workshop**. The partnership allows fans to make their own stuffed interactive penguin, inspired by Mumble, the hero of next month's big CG-animated feature about the Arctic birds. The plush 16-inch Beary Limited edition Collectibear comes with a light-up heart (take that, E.T.!), soft fur and a cheerful yellow bowtie and sells for \$22.

The stores will also offer other stuffed playthings based on other characters such as Gloria and Ramon from the November release. We also have hearts set on **Thinkway's** clever dancing-and-singing Mumble toys, which tap their feet and sing the "Jump and Move" song from the movie. Mumble's beak

moves and he even responds with talking/dancing when you speak to him!

Priced at \$29.99, these fun items should keep you happy until the next crop of penguin movies hits the screens next year!



### This Just In: Elmo Still Very Ticklish!

**S**esame Street's cute, red, fuzzy guy has done it again. **Fisher-Price's** 10th anniversary version of the Tickle Me Elmo doll—the T.M.X. Elmo—

was such a big hit with consumers last month that only a day after its release date, people were selling it on eBay for \$500—it's officially priced at \$39.99. In case you were wondering, the T.M.X. stands for Tickle Me Extreme because the new toy has major laughing fits, slaps his knee, falls to the floor, rolls over and pounds his arm. After its much publicized unveiling on September 19, T.M.X. Elmo sold out online and at the Toys 'R' Us, Wal-Mart and KB Toys across the country. Experts say demand for the toy is very high not only because of Elmo's popularity and its novelty factor, but because advanced technology could limit the number produced for this holiday season. So if you have a young Elmo fan in your family, you'd better ask them to come up with an alternative holiday gift list for Santa!



### Selling for Peanuts

**W**e have our big Animation Lover's Gift Guide in next month's issue, but we thought we should give you an early heads up on a special item on [SnoopyGift.com](http://SnoopyGift.com). If you've been to the wonderful Charles M. Schulz Museum in Santa Rosa, Calif., you might have seen the 17-foot by 12-foot tile mural designed by Japanese artist Yoshiteru Otani. Covering the south wall of the museum's Great Hall, the mural features an image of Lucy holding the football for Charlie Brown and is composed of 3,588 Peanuts comic strip images printed on 2"x8" ceramic tiles. Now you can have your own reproductions of some of these tiles (\$20 each) exclusively from [SnoopyGift.com](http://SnoopyGift.com). The popular beagle and the rest of the gang are all represented on this site and will be happy to help you take care of some of the quality people on your holiday gift list.





## Land Before Time Dinos Far From Extinct

**T**alk about a movie with staying power. After generating 11 successful sequels on DVD, Don Bluth's 1988 animated feature, *The Land Before Time*, will be making its TV series debut on Cartoon Network in the spring of 2007 (26 episodes, airing five days a week). Last month, it was announced that **Playmates** will be the master toy licensee for the upcoming animated series. Under license from **Universal Studios Consumer Products**, Playmates will introduce a new toy line for the show in fall 2007. It will include a full line of figures, vehicles, play sets and plush for ages 3 to 7. The prehistoric critters will also be seen in two new direct-to-DVD adventures in the next two years. Face it, there's literally no stopping Littlefoot the Apatosaurus, Cera the Triceratops and Ducky the Parasaurolophus.

While we're on the subject of extinct species, those other stuffed animals you might have seen at target recently are none other than tie-ins for Cartoon Network's *Harry and His Bucket Full of Dinosaurs*. Fisher-Price is the master toy licensee for the popular animated series based on the children's book property (produced by CCI Entertainment, Collingwood O'Hare and Silver Fox Films). The Fisher-Price collection includes toys for preschoolers up to five-years-old, including basic and talking figures, Dino-mobile vehicles, Dino World mini-play sets and plush toys. Since its debut on CN last year, the show has build up a strong following with the preschoolers. Licensed through Warner Bros. Consumer Products, the traditionally animated project is based on the books by British writer Ian Whybrow and centers on an inquisitive five-year-old who finds a magical bucket of six toy dinosaurs who take him on special adventures in their world. It definitely looks like the dawning of a new Jurassic age. It won't be long before Fred and Wilma Flintstone's Dino gets his own three-picture deal at Warner Bros.!

## Looney About Lunar Jim

**S**ince its launch in January on CBC Canada, the **Alliance Atlantis/Halifax Film Company's** stop-motion series *Lunar Jim* has found a lot of homes on broadcasting outlets all over the world. Based on an original concept by

Alexander Bar, the charming preschool show follows the titular character and his friends who live in a tiny village called Moona Luna (yes—the village is located

on the moon!). The show is bound to make waves at this month's Brand Licensing Show in London since Alliance and Fisher-Price signed a wide master toy licensing agreement to develop, manufacture and distribute toys including action figures and vehicles. The toy launch is scheduled for Canada and the U.K. this fall. Adorable Kids will handle sleepwear and underwear plans and Calego Intl. is developing a line of bags, backpacks and accessories. BBC Worldwide has also reported licensing plans with Mookie, Cohen and Wilks, Wesco and Vogue. Insert your own joke here about Lunar Jim being over the moon about his global toy empire. To see more of the popular astronaut, visit [www.lunarjim.com](http://www.lunarjim.com).



## ADV Launches Digital Download Store

If you can't wait to get your favorite anime titles on DVD, John Ledford and his forward-thinking team at ADV Films have just the thing for you. The new **ADV Universe Digital Download Store** is offering 1,000 minutes of anime available for download-to-own this month. In some cases, these DVD episodes will be available for download even before the U.S. DVD release date. To promote the new store, ADV Universe is offering the first episode of the new show *Guyver* absolutely free for download to anyone who registers as a member of the site. This is a sweet deal since the *Guyver* DVD doesn't hit stores until mid-November. Among the other titles available (\$4.99 for half-hour episodes and \$19.98 for most movies) are *Comic Party Revolution TV*, *Gilgamesh*, *Goannar*, *Lady Death* and *Parasite Dolls*. "Anime fans are very tech-savvy consumers, and they demand high-quality images from their entertainment," says Ledford. "We developed the offerings with them foremost in our minds." For more info, visit [www.advuniverse.com](http://www.advuniverse.com). ■



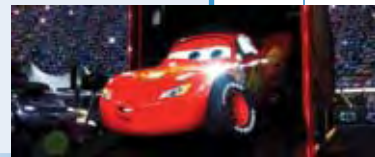
LICENSING

## Chartbusters

The following animated DVDs are doing brisk business on [amazon.com](http://amazon.com) this month:

1. Cars (Disney)
2. The Little Mermaid: 2-Disc Special Ed. (Disney)
3. The Wild (Disney)
4. Over the Hedge (Paramount)
5. Ice Age—The Meltdown (Fox)
6. Barbie in The 12 Dancing Princesses (Universal)
7. SchoolHouse Rock: Special 30th Ed. (Disney)
8. Curious George (Universal)
9. South Park: Eighth Season (Paramount)
10. Teen Titans: Second Season (Warner Bros.)

Source: [amazon.com](http://amazon.com), 9/15/06





## Tech Reviews

### Autodesk Maya 8.0

Last summer, Maya 8.0 was officially released at the Boston Siggraph event alongside its new stepbrother Max. This new version has some distinct features that qualify it for a category beyond a mere point upgrade. And as far as I can tell, most of the new features are not frivolous—even though they decided to keep the zoom-pan Google Earth technology for the viewport navigation.



The largest leap from a general performance standpoint is that you now have a 64-bit version of Maya available to you ... if you have WindowsXP64 and Linux on the AMD 64 processors—sorry Apple, no love for you at this juncture. The 64-bit increases the accessible memory address and the size of the individual instructions the program can process. You can use vastly more RAM (WindowsXP can only use 2GB of RAM effectively—regardless of how many DIMMs you boast about in the chat rooms), and the program uses SSE2 instructions allowing two floating-point computations to be calculated at once. These put together equal a ton of computing power in a program that is already pretty robust. There are a few minor bits that don't work in 64-bit, like Vector rendering, QuicktimeVR and RIB export, as well as Motion Capture processing, which Autodesk recommends using Motion Builder for. This is an irrefutably saavy business recommendation.

Another huge step that perked my antennae was the ability to save out vertex animation caches to external files, allowing for scenes for lighters and fx guys who don't have

a cumbersome character rig but have the latest animation because the animator graciously cached out animation before he left for the day. Another advantage is the ability to blend two or more caches to create variations without the need to reanimate. I can't express enough how important this feature is to a production pipeline, and I'm glad to finally see it implemented. If Max 9.0 will read and write the same cache file format (which we will find out next month), then the connectivity between

the packages should be seamless, and Maya's journey to the dark side shall be complete.

Animators can do their thing in Maya or Max. Lighters can use Renderman, Brazil, VRay or Mental Ray (available in both packages already). The lines are being blurred, and I'm definitely happy to be a witness and participant in this sea change.

Autodesk has only slightly rearranged the Maya menus. With more advanced polygon modeling tools (lack of which in the previous version is an oft-cited issue), the modeling module has been split into polygons and surfaces. The same type of face lift happened within the UV map editor, which has had some nice features added such as color coding for overlapping faces and normal direction and transferring UV mapping from two different models—with different topologies. I don't know what kind of voodoo is going on there, but I'm sure there are a lot of Haitian goats and chickens missing.

Advances have been made in the cloth, hair, fur and dynamics modules adding more functionality and better performance—overall, some nice features. Maya users will be pleased, I think, but I don't see Max or XSI users becoming jealous, outside of the already powerful Fluid Dynamics engine. But, it's a good program—and always has been despite gripes from artists and technicians. (Which software doesn't have its share of gripes?) The proof is in the pudding, and you can't really refute the

by Todd  
Sheridan  
Perry



number of outstanding shows that Maya has on its resume.

As an epilogue, I have to say that I'm seeing the faint clues that the workflow of Maya and the workflow of Max are beginning to fuse: This is definitely a Max approach. Autodesk makes a strong affirmative statement that the company will support both platforms. We'll see if the next Max release will inherit a little piece of Maya.

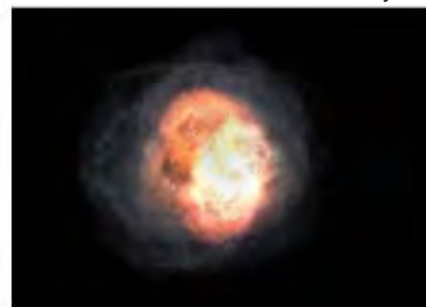
Website: <http://usa.autodesk.com>

Price: \$1999 (Maya 8.0 Complete); \$899 (Maya 8.0 Complete Upgrade from Maya 7.0)

### wondertouch Pro Emitters for particlellusion 3.0

particlellusion has been around for a few years, providing 2D artists around the world with sprite-based particle animations. And for a little program, it sure has got spunk. So much so, that Discreet, before it was absorbed by Autodesk, purchased the rights to implement it directly into Combustion. The user forum is substantial, and the libraries of emitters have grown because of the efforts of the developers, but even more from the user base.

Those guys at wondertouch have got together with their most prolific and talented PI artists, and created a Pro Emitter library set.



Because PI is so customizable, the libraries begin to take on specific looks or feelings based on the artist—kind of like being able to tell Chopin from Mozart—in very simplistic terms. Three artists are represented in the ProEmitters package: Phalkanubba Rath from Cambo-

continued on page 60





# MASHI MARO The New Face Out of ASIA!



Car accessory



Electric



Doll



Fancy



Living



Clothes



Mobile



Game



CLKO Entertainment Co., Ltd.



## Tech Reviews

continued from page 60

dia, Sasha Milica from Russia and Tom Granberg from Norway. Each artist has his own distinctive style.

Rath's work circles around the Abstract library. Each of the emitters has a very organic feeling and, at times, it frankly boggles the mind to think that this is actually a particle system. If you can recall Beethoven's Fifth Symphony sequence from *Fantasia*, you might get an idea of what the library has to offer.

Milica's work is a study of backgrounds. Complex shapes of intertwining color, continually changing as time moves forward. (See what this stuff does to me? I'm actually starting to wax poetic and go metaphysical on you!) Rath and Milica make me want to put on Pink Floyd's *Dark Side of the Moon* album.

On the more practical side, Granberg has a veritable cornucopia of emitters for effects like explosions, glass breaking, debris, frost growing, fog, dust, etc., etc. I could see all of them being used in production work to great effect, and his library alone is worth the price of admission.

Also on the practical side from a motion graphics standpoint, both Rath and Milica have a pretty wide selection of emitters tailored to animated graphics and text. These libraries could save a lot of time and money for design houses.

Now please don't get me wrong. I may be coming across as pedantic when describing the first set of libraries. But that's not my intention. My specialty is recreating reality, so I am immediately attracted to Granberg's Eclectic: The ethereal creations from the Abstract and Artistic libraries simply don't fit that mold. However, I can definitely see them used in design work for title sequences, commercials, promo spots—anything where design plays a huge role. The reason that I know this is because design houses carry loads and loads of stock and B-Roll footage to blend into the designs. Glittering water, sun through the leaves on trees, out-of-focus butterflies bouncing from flower to flower—organic stuff that ends up simply providing motion and color, abstracted from the source. This is where the Pro Emitters will shine for a production house. Once you buy the libraries, you tap into an unlimited resource of design elements.

particleIllusion has stood on its own for years. I'm surprised that it's not used by more production houses around the world. This new library for purchase is a new approach for won-

dertouch since there are so many libraries already available (and new ones are posted monthly). But I can justify the purchase because they really are a cut above the norm, and the artists behind them should get some much-deserved kudos.

**Website:** [www.wondertouch.com](http://www.wondertouch.com)

**Price:** \$175 (Six Libraries, 180 emitters package); \$39 (individual library)

### NVIDIA's Quadro FX 5500

Arguably, nothing in computer technology changes more rapidly than graphics displays. It seems like every month there is a new card available for us to review at the magazine. NVIDIA holds the majority of the graphics market, both in professional production outlets and gaming companies.

Last month, the new Quadro FX 5500 was sent to me to take a gander at and run through the paces. I certainly took a gander—I couldn't miss it sitting on top of the desk. This is a mon-



ster card. Those who have seen the older brother card, the 4400, will know what I'm talking about. It fits into a PCX x16 slot on the motherboard and has the thickness of two standard cards. The bulk of the width is the cooling system which consists of a huge fan and a system of cooling vanes and pipes covering the G71GL-UX GPU and the 1GB of RAM. This release is superior to its gaming cousins, the GeForce cards, as it provides advanced production features such as color profiles, gamma control, texture size and depth, stereo settings, etc. If you need to splurge for two cards (which is no small consideration since the card is three times more expensive than most base workstations nowadays), you can use the advanced SLI system to connect the two and have them work in tandem to increase the performance and visual quality.

Wouldn't you know it, as I got ready to try out the card, my primary machine died, and my other workstations were so old that they didn't have the PCX x16 card to contain this beast. So my friends at Blur Studio, Duane Powell and Leo Santos, stepped up to provide a machine and an artist (that's Leo, himself). And, we

came up with some results.

Running 3ds Max, the card handled a static scene with over 4 million polygons using DirectX v.9 like it was butter. That's 60% faster than a similar box running the FX 4400. However, running OpenGL didn't have much of a difference. When a production-based scene was opened (which should be the real way to test these things), the card handled textures, meshes and lighting amazingly well. When you started to scrub the animation, though, you didn't get much of an advantage. This is because the rigging and deformation calculations happening on the character shifted away from the GPUs on the card and back to the CPUs on the motherboard. One can't really fault NVIDIA for that. Oddly enough 3ds Max began to slow down with more complex meshes—which if you think about it, actually makes sense. However, it is odd when the same model loaded into XSI displays without a hitch.

The conclusion? The Quadro FX 5500 is faster than its siblings when running in DirectX and performing tasks such as modeling and texturing that are more display intensive. But don't expect to get an all-around performance boost when you are doing CPU heavy functions like scrubbing animation, calculating dynamics, etc.

Personally, I would definitely invest in the FX 5500. However, I'm a techno geek, and quite frankly, I need some strength in my hardware for the work I do. For serious production houses, a 60% speed boost for modelers and lighters is nothing to scoff at and should definitely be considered. Are the artists being slowed down because the display card can't handle the poly count? If the answer is, "yes," you are losing money. For the hobbyist or beginner, I'd go with a GeForce rather than cashing in your bonds to splurge on a Quadro. You get all the power you could possibly need, and more than likely you aren't going to be matching LUTs to a scanning house to ensure calibration with the five other vfx houses and the editorial DI.

After finishing the trial runs in production situations, we did the real test and launched Quake 4 at 1600x1200 resolution with anti-aliasing brought all the way up and all the bells and whistles turned on. Yes, we fragged like the mercenaries we always dreamed of being.

**Website:** [www.nvidia.com](http://www.nvidia.com)

**Price:** \$2999 ■

**Todd Sheridan Perry is the co-owner and vfx supervisor for Max Ink Cafe and Max Ink Productions. You can email him at [ducky@maxinkcafe.com](mailto:ducky@maxinkcafe.com).**

BE  
INSPIRED!

asia  
media  
FESTIVAL 2006  
SINGAPORE  
13 Nov - 1 Dec 2006

[www.asiamediafestival.com](http://www.asiamediafestival.com)

From 13 Nov to 1 Dec 2006, you too can experience the excitement of Asia Media Festival (AMF), an annual line-up of public and trade activities designed to delight all senses of the media and entertainment industry.

Be part of the most explosive media fiesta of the year! Whether you are looking for business and networking opportunities or discovering what Asian media has to offer, AMF is an event that is bound to inspire!

For enquiries, please contact Mark Gan at T: +65 6780 4571 or E: [amf@reedexpo.com.sg](mailto:amf@reedexpo.com.sg). Visit [www.asiamediafestival.com](http://www.asiamediafestival.com)

Organised by :



Hosted by:



Anchor events of the Asia Media Festival:





## Digital Magic

# The Age of Tail-evision and Da Vinci Toons

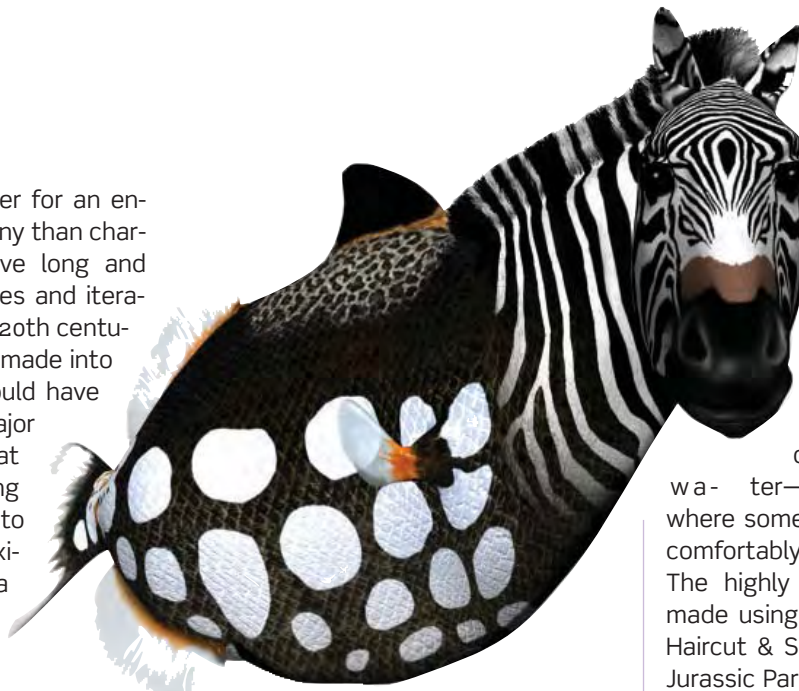


by Chris Grove

Few things are better for an entertainment company than characters that can live long and prosper in multiple venues and iterations. Back in the quaint 20th century, novels that had been made into movies, for example, would have the banner: "Now a major motion picture!" And that was about all marketing execs felt they needed to do to claim they'd maximized the potential of a given property. In the multi-platform 21st century, however, the stakes are higher and more is needed. So characters that can exist as toys, in books, as licensed products, in movies, TV series and comic books is a consumer consummation devoutly to be wished for. Just ask the creator of *The Simpsons*.

Often, as with the just-mentioned Matt Groening property, the most successful products start their life quietly and with little expectation of being a revenue bonanza. That may be the scenario for Animal Planet, whose newly created characters for a series of show opens and closes, interstitials, I.D.'s, lower thirds and mini-vignettes could easily become a family of plush toys and more.

New York City-based broadcast designer Lipow Stoner recently completed the project for the network's Friday night segments "Tail-evision." The animations feature a new breed of hybrid animals that have had such a huge impact at Animal Planet that the company is considering a range of merchandising for Discovery stores. To



that end, the interstitials have had their original run extended for at least another year.

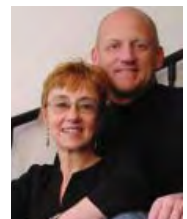
Animal Planet's original assignment to Lipow Stoner: design a friendly look for three-hours of Friday night TV that would appeal strongly to both kids and adults. AP wanted the animated packages to be a key component in turning the cable channel's recent group of hit shows like *Meerkat Manor*, *The Most Extreme*, and *Amazing Animal Videos* into a must-see branded block.

Marian Lipow, LSD principal and creative director, and Earl Stoner, LSD principal and executive producer, devised 3D animations featuring approachable new animal combinations such as the Tigorse (half tiger, half horse), Zebfish (zebra and clown triggerfish), and Chualafly (a combination of a chihuahua, koala bear and a monarch butterfly). "(The) concept grew out of an illustration exercise I had done once where I created new, unique animals out of existing animals," says

Lipow. "I thought this would be an interesting jumping-off point for me to create a series of intriguing animals in an original environment. (And we) put them in a place that's simultaneously on land and underwater—an un-delineated location where something like a Zebfish could comfortably co-exist with a Tigorse." The highly realistic creations, were made using Maya, After Effects, and Haircut & Shave. "(It's) like a friendly Jurassic Park filled with flora and fauna that are familiar but perhaps not indigenous to each other," Lipow says (to see examples log on to [www.lipow-stoner.com](http://www.lipow-stoner.com)).

## Breaking Da Vinci's Artistic Code

Amazing to think that just 15 years ago the guys and gals in the animation programs at major U.S. film schools were looked at askance. In 2006, if you don't have either animation skills or a basic knowledge of the medium, you're at a huge disadvantage. One recent example of the ubiquity of animation techniques and software: Manchester, England-based Cosgrove Hall has been using its expertise to create anima-



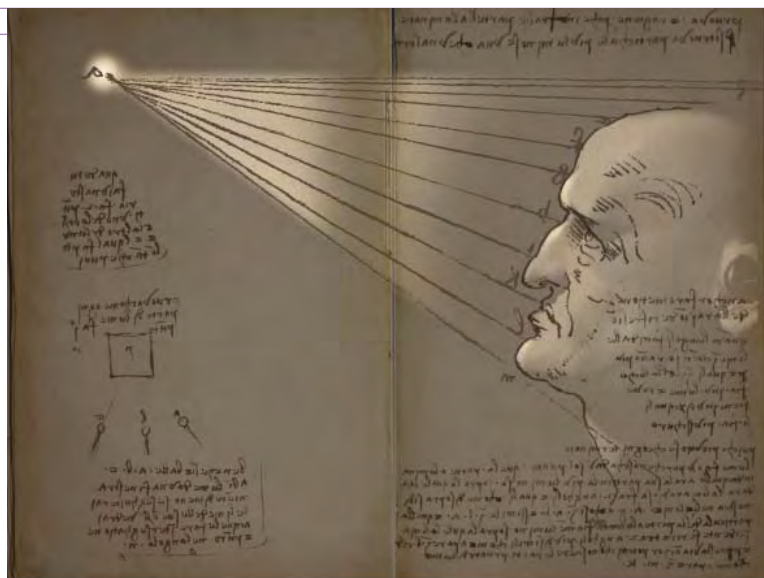
Lipow - Stoner



Steve Maher

tions for the just-opened Leonardo Da Vinci exhibition at London's famed Victoria & Albert Museum. Among other things, the animations bring to life pages from Leonardo's small notebooks, in which he detailed his observations and theories.

"To be asked to animate the drawings of Leonardo Da Vinci was a daunting task," says Cosgrove animator Steve Maher. "What was a revelation was how many of the preoccupations of an animator Leonardo shared—the analysis of proportion and anatomy, the formalized notation of the shapes the mouth makes in speech, capturing movement in a sequence of drawings—all of these are the basic framework of the animators art and all are there in Leonardo's



notebooks."

The ability to employ computer-modeling skills alongside the more traditional techniques of drawn animation gave Cosgrove animators a means to maintain faithfulness to the artist's line quality. "The original drawings vary in style from wonderfully spontaneous snapshots of figures in movement to very carefully rendered ana-

tomical studies," Maher says. "Some of them are quick thumbnails while others are painstaking illustrations of his theories on light and flight. They're Leonardo's thoughts manifest on paper. We saw our task not to homogenize them into a form more easier to animate but to work with exactly what we had and to make that move."

Needless to say, it's doubtful that Leonardo ever had the idea that his artwork would come to life amongst produc-

tions including *Rupert*, *Postman Pat* and *Doctor Who*, but the project has been a tremendous success for Cosgrove Hall—mainly as a showcase of the animation studio's skills to a whole new audience. ■

**Chris Grove is a Los Angeles-based journalist and actor. If you have any hot tips for Chris, he can be reached at [edit@animationmagazine.net](mailto:edit@animationmagazine.net).**



DQ Entertainment located in the heart of India has co-production partners spread across USA, Canada, Europe & Australia

**ANIMATION & VFX DIVISION**  
2D Traditional Animation  
Flash / CGI Animation  
3D Animation & VFX

**GAMES DEVELOPMENT DIVISION**  
3D Next generation console game asset & Cinematics  
Mobile Games Development & testing facilities



*Facilities*

- State of the art 1,20,000 Sft. production facilities
- Over 2500+ experienced professionals
- Award winning Proprietary resource & production management ERP solutions
- Multinational Animation Directors, Supervisors and Technicians




**DQ ENTERTAINMENT LIMITED**

Contact: [sales@dqentertainment.com](mailto:sales@dqentertainment.com)  
Tel - INDIA: +91-40-23553726 & 27, LOS ANGELES: +1-310-938-4466, TOKYO: +03-3648-1355  
URL: [www.dqentertainment.com](http://www.dqentertainment.com)

*creating images that move to the Rhythm of Life*

VISUAL EFFECTS

[www.animationmagazine.net](http://www.animationmagazine.net)

ANIMATION MAGAZINE

November 2006 63





# To Eternity and Beyond

The mechanical and digital fx crews joined forces to create the psychedelic visions of Darren Aronofsky's *The Fountain*. by Ron Magid

VISUAL EFFECTS

**T**he boundaries between the real and digital worlds get really blurred in Darren Aronofsky's *The Fountain*. The film's hallucinogenic imagery—particularly the ones relating to the mammoth tree that is the source of the titular fountain and which also serves as a spaceship for Tom Verde (Hugh Jackman) was often a blend of CG and on-camera special effects.

The result was that mechanical special effects supervisor Louis Craig (300, *The Day After Tomorrow*) and his crew found themselves devising live-action animation gags that would later be incorporated in FX shots created by visual effects designers Dan Schrecker and Jeremy Dawson (*Frida*), Aronofsky's college friends and his go-to fx gurus on *Pi* and *Requiem for a Dream*.

"Darren was really trying to minimize the impact of the computer," explains Craig, a 30-year mechanical effects vet-

eran who worked on *The Fountain* for six months. "I would say 85 to 90 percent was achieved in-camera. We tried to hide as much as possible the seam between the real world and CG."

Many of *The Fountain's* 180 visual effects shots involved adding deep space backgrounds to the unusual spaceship

be organic. We worked with the English macro photographer, Peter Parks, who does science photography of reactions in Petri dishes, and that's how we ended up creating all the outer space footage. There's something beautiful about the idea of shooting outer space that way—the chemical reactions in that Petri dish must be the same ones going on inside nebulas. Then Intelligent Creatures in Toronto created the CG bubble around the spaceship and did all the outer space compositing using a bunch of shots from Peter, which became the bigger vistas."

Yet, there were many effects that

"There's something beautiful about the idea of shooting outer space that way [using scientific images of chemical reactions in a Petri dish]...they must be the same ones going on inside nebulas."

—Dan Schrecker, *The Fountain's* visual effects designer

set with its huge tree, which was surrounded by 180-degree greenscreen. "Darren didn't want 3D stuff in there, that's the thing he was really against," Schrecker agrees. "It would've been so easy to say, 'Oh cool, we're going to make outer space on the computer the way they did in *Superman Returns*, but Darren really wanted everything to

Aronofsky wanted to do in-camera. Among the toughest of these was the zero gravity effect on Hugh Jackman as he traveled through time with the Tree of Life. "We did a lot of tests at the beginning to find out if there was any kind of device to make him look like he was

continued on page 66



MipCom  
Booth 14.22

# ANNECY 2007



INTERNATIONAL ANIMATED FILM MARKET  
FROM 13 TO 15 JUNE - [WWW.ANNECY.ORG](http://WWW.ANNECY.ORG)



*The Fountain*

continued from page 66

floating—either on a camera crane or on wires,” Craig remembers. “We finally did some camera tests in a pool and Darren decided to do everything in the water, so we spent a lot of time working on all these little rigs to make that look like Hugh was floating in the air instead of in liquid. We also had to treat the water so there was nothing in suspension between Hugh and the lens.”

Essentially, Aronofsky wanted Craig's crew to create a live-action animation of Jackman's actions that would have the ethereal slow motion nuances of a dream. In a tank in Montreal, Craig built a barbecue rig that was suspended in the water to create the illusion that Jackman is falling gracefully from the tree. “Darren wanted Hugh to start in the ‘Lotus position,’ come out of that position and do a back flip, and land at the foot of the tree,” Schrecker says. “They had Hugh on a barbecue spit that would rotate his body underwater, and we used an underwater dolly so the camera could rotate around him. Hugh was absolutely incredible—the fact that he could get underwater, in a lotus position, holding

his breath, attached to a spit while he did back-flips—It looks so effortless.”

“We did three days of filming with him in the water to simulate the weightlessness of his performance,” Craig adds. “We never thought he'd be able to spend that much time in the water, but Hugh was very good about it. We shot him at 24 frames per second and they might've sped it up to 36 or 42 frames, but not much. The refraction is tricky when you [overcrank] in the water—if you're not careful, everything can have a weird look. CG was used to slow down the effect of the water on his clothing—it doesn't flow like he's in the water at all—the end result is interesting when he's climbing the tree and floating in mid-air when he's time-traveling in the sphere with the tree.”

Jackman's move and his landing at the base of the tree was accomplished via compositing the underwater plate into the spaceship environment. “By doing a camera move, we made it look like he was actually moving,” Schrecker says. But that's not all. “We ended up doing a face replacement, because when you're underwater in the lotus position

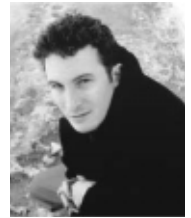
attached to a barbecue spit, you look a little funny.”

When Craig and Schrecker finally saw the result of their labors, they were shocked by the film they'd helped to create. “This one is very heartfelt, and I think that's hard for some people to deal with,” Schrecker says of a disappointing audience reaction at the Venice and Toronto film festivals. “It's like all of his movies—people either like them or they don't—there's not a lot of middle ground.”

“I didn't know what to expect: It was such a tough movie to do and Darren's got such a vision,” Craig adds. “We came out of the screening so shocked that at the party after, it took awhile for everybody to even talk about the film. This is the most powerful of the movies Darren's made.” ■

Warner Bros.' *The Fountain* opens in theaters on November 22nd.

Ron Magid is a Los Angeles-based journalist who specializes in visual effects.



Darren Aronofsky

## VISUAL EFFECTS

**Mixing Love, Life and CG Technology:**

Although *The Fountain* might have puzzled early audiences at festivals, nobody can deny the stark beauty of Darren Aronofsky's heady visions.

# Quinto evento anual da LILA • Fifth Annual LILA • Quinto evento anual de la LILA

Partial list of past attendees

Warner Bros. Consumer Products  
United Media  
4Kids Entertainment  
Salsa Entertainment  
MGM Consumer Products  
Sony Pictures  
Dreamworks  
NBA  
Major League Baseball  
Grupo Lorena  
Anheuser-Busch  
HIT Entertainment  
DIC Entertainment  
King Features  
McDonald's  
Mauricio de Sousa International Exim  
Kellogg's  
ShoPro  
Losani  
Licensing & Promotions  
Tycoon Enterprises  
Redibra  
P & L Global Network  
Playboy Enterprises  
Paws Inc.  
Cereal Partners Worldwide  
IMG Licensing  
Alegro International  
Arcor  
G. Breuer  
Hershey  
Argos S.A.  
Red Nose  
Sigma Alimentos  
Amscan  
Kellogg de Mexico  
Products Simex  
Frito-Lay International  
Alon International  
Bico International  
Col Med SA  
Cresta Promotion  
Dynamics Worldwide Networks  
Esprit International  
Sunbeam Latin America  
Granmark  
G.S. International  
Latin Trade Magazine  
Hallmark Cards International  
Walt Disney Television  
Rican  
New Line Cinema  
Locomotion  
Promociones Globales  
Megatrix SAU

# Licensing in LATIN AMERICA

## A Conference & Networking Exhibition

**November 6th & 7th • Puerto Vallarta, Mexico**

**Sheraton Baganvillas Resort & Convention Center**



LILA is a one-of-a-kind executive conference where corporate executives come to learn about the ins and outs of doing business in Latin America through licensing, merchandising and promotions.

Hear leading marketing, retail, promotions and manufacturing experts discuss trends, how do to business in the territories, opportunities, and what the future holds.

Meet with potential business partners in beautiful Puerto Vallarta.



Licensing Brands International



Premiere Sponsors

### Monday, November 6th

Breakfast

Seminars:

- Wireless Content Opportunities in Latin America
- Legal Issues & Anti-Piracy Strategies
- Licensee Perspectives
- Building Brands in Latin America

Lunch

Seminars:

- Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG)
  - Successful Licensed Promotions
  - Retail Concepts-A Case Studies
- Welcoming Cocktail Party

### Tuesday, November 7th

Keynote Breakfast

Networking Exhibition™  
Networking Luncheon

### **Contact Info:**

Licensing Brands International  
**212-627-5828**

Christine Annechino, Ernie Lustenring  
email: [licensingbrands@att.net](mailto:licensingbrands@att.net)

Website: [www.licensinginlatinamerica.com](http://www.licensinginlatinamerica.com)

Mattel  
Mattel Mexico  
Extreme Global Licenses  
Fantasias Sulamericana  
MTV International  
Nestle Mexico  
Nestle  
RI Happy  
Produccion & Distribucion  
Productos El Cid  
Salo  
Snap Toys  
St. Jacks Industries  
Target Promotions  
Panini  
Teleshop Ecuador  
Televis  
Entertainment  
Bonsa  
PB Kids  
General Mills Latin America  
Riscen  
The Coca-Cola Company  
The Marketing Store  
The Licensing Letter  
Rashro  
Cadbury Schweppes (Latin America)  
Cedro  
Danone  
Grupo Bimbo  
Filmex Animation  
Sesame Workshop  
Televisa International  
Wal-Mart Mexico  
TV Azteca  
Makro Atacadi  
Venevision  
Parmalat  
Elma Chips  
Connect TV  
Telemundo  
Grupo Lorena  
Sukest  
TV Bandeirantes  
Nike de Mexico  
Cheskin  
Promar  
Bell South  
Rashro  
Cloverway  
Nelvana  
Classic Media  
Scholastic  
Ragdoll  
Bradford Licensing  
Nancy Bailey & Associates  
and many others...





## Cause & Effect

# Spaceships Fueled by Spectacular CG Juice

The pros at Vancouver-based Atmosphere discuss creating the futuristic razzle dazzle of Sci Fi's *Battlestar Galactica* series. **by Barbara Robertson**

**W**hen *Battlestar Galactica* rolled onto television screens in 2003, it quickly captured a fan base of loyal viewers. The series, a thoughtful remake of the 1970s-era sci fi classic, follows a ragtag crew of humans onboard the battleship *Galactica*, apparently the universe's only survivors of an attack by cybernetic Cylons. Ronald D. Moore "re-imagined" the cult favorite in 2003 with a darker tone and a few sexy human-looking Cylons. It appeared first as a miniseries on the Sci-Fi Channel with Edward James Olmos starring as Admiral William Adama. The mini's success spawned a weekly series that debuted in October 2004.

Now, as *Battlestar Galactica* moves into a hotly anticipated third season, visual effects

supervisor Gary Hutzel and visual effects coordinator Mike Gibson have once again turned to Vancouver-based Atmosphere Visual Effects to create digital space ships, Cylon Centurians and other award-winning visual effects, on time and on budget, as they have for the past two seasons.

We caught up with Atmosphere's three founders, Jeremy Hoey, Andrew Karr, and Tom Archer, as the studio was wrapping up Episode 3, "Exodus: Part 1," scheduled to air October 13. Hoey is the lead matte painter, Karr, the head of 3D, and Archer, head of compositing. So far, "Episode 3" has consumed 9 Terabytes of disk space.

"We're getting closer to film work in terms of demands," says Hoey. "Our renderfarm,

which has 175 processors, has been going nonstop for over a month; we have some very involved shots in this one." Although Atmosphere's work on the series started in June, as it has in previous years, and will continue until February, with each season, the sequences have grown larger and more involved.

"Our first big one was Episode 110 in the first season," says Archer. In that show, "The Hand of God," the fleet, which was running out of tylium fuel, found an asteroid loaded with the precious ore. Unfortunately, the Cylons got there first.

"Gary [Hutzel] came to us and said he had this really huge episode, 50 shots, and he needed to know tomorrow if we could pull it off," remembers Hoey. "We hadn't started on the previous episodes yet. There were only

**continued on page 70**



Andrew Karr



Jeremy Hoey



Tom Archer



## PLAY WELL WITH OTHERS

Be a player in this town-KidsTown, that is.

Join others in your genre in a specialized pavilion, on the exhibit floor, for kids' content, programming, distribution, licensing, and merchandizing, in the world's largest TV market.

Come play with us, in Las Vegas.

[exhibitinfo@natpe.org](mailto:exhibitinfo@natpe.org)

## EVOLVE & PROSPER<sup>TM</sup>

**NATPE**   
**07**

CONFERENCE & EXHIBITION  
MONDAY – THURSDAY  
1.15.07\*–1.18.07  
MANDALAY BAY RESORT  
LAS VEGAS NEVADA  
\*1.15.07 Featuring Mobile++

[www.NATPE.org](http://www.NATPE.org)

© 2006 NATPE. All rights reserved.



## Cause &amp; Effect

continued from page 70

about a half dozen of us; we were a wee little company. We panicked and then we sat down and decided to take the risk."

Within three weeks, they had moved into new offices, hired more staff, and bought more render nodes. In 2005, Atmosphere's work on "The Hand of God" episode received an Emmy nomination for "Outstanding Special Visual Effects for a series."

"Gary took a leap of faith with us," says Hoey. "It was a bit of a big hand pushing us to the next level." And Hutzel kept pushing. "He always wants to raise the bar," Hoey says, "and we want to as well. If we stayed at the same level, we'd get bored."

This year, the studio received a nomination for Best Animated Character from the Visual Effects Society for work on the Cylon Centurion characters in the second season's Episode 203, "Fragged."

The Centurians are full-metal robots, agile, shiny, with helmet heads and an oscillating red eye. They look like a cross between a knight in shining armor and a Terminator. In "Fragged," they run through a forest.

"The forest environment was completely unforgiving," says Hoey. "The Cylons were reflecting everything around them and pinpoints of light from above. It was a big test for our new HDRI pipeline; it kicked the Cylons to a new level."

Convincing Hutzel to do HDRI wasn't easy, though. "The pace of shooting is insanely fast," says Hoey. "They didn't want to stop and wait for the effects crew to take a bunch of HDRI shots of chrome balls."

Instead, Atmosphere devised a creative solution using fisheye lens and the auto bracketing on a digital SLR camera. The auto-bracketing gave them a range of f-stops, the fish-eye lens substituted for the chrome ball. "It's a bit of a cheat, but it got us over the hurdle," says Hoey. "Even if we're not sure

we'll put a Cylon in a scene, someone can rush out and take the images while the crew is changing the set."

Atmosphere uses NewTek's Lightwave for 3D modeling, animation and rendering, and Eyeon's digital fusion for compositing. To save time in rendering and allow for color correction, the studio rendered the Cylons



using several layers. "Even when we have something as simple as a space ship, we use layers," says Karr. "We have separate specular, RGB, key light, ambient and other passes to give our compositors a large arsenal of images. A space battle might have 200 layers."

The battle in season three's Episode 3, was particularly render intensive. "It takes place in space and on a planet's surface," says Hoey. "There are swarms of ships, lots of explosions and damage."

Ironically, *Battlestar Galactica's* free-flowing style and dynamic camera moves means that such scenes need to be tightly animated: when the camera zooms in with the equivalent of a 200mm or 300mm lens, a small change in the camera's angle could mean a big change in the animation. "The style of the camera and the style of the show are one and the same," says Karr. "And, there's no right side up with the space ships. It's quite fun and sometimes quite challenging." The animation, whether of Cylons or space ships, is keyframed.

All told, the studio has around 30 space ships in its asset library, some topping four million polygons. "I can't open the *Galactica* in one go," says Hoey. "We split it into a number of layers."

Daniel Osaki, the lead modeler, was nominated for an Emmy in 2006 for his work on season two's Episode 12, "Resurrection Ship, Part 2." Sometimes he designs ships from scratch, sometimes he works with designs given to him. In either case, he has to work quickly, as does the rest of the crew. The production schedule, tight to begin with, squeezes as the season progresses. "We've had as little as a week and a half and as much as six or seven weeks," says Hoey.

Moreover, although Atmosphere might start with a previzualization of sequence, final shots don't always match the previz, which means the free-wheeling camera style often reflects an ever-changing

postproduction environment as well. "It's always a moving target," says Hoey. "They lock the edit quite late in the game. Quite often, they'll shuffle sequences and have completely different story points, and that means the visual effects don't tell the story they need to tell. I think it makes for a better show, but we have to scramble."

How do they scramble? "Gary makes smart decisions, and we've gotten very good at triage," says Archer. "Also, our artists know the show very well now, so they've been getting quicker. We have a great crew who put in the hard work to make it happen."

The extent to which the crew has to scramble becomes clear when you ask the founders whether we can expect to see them raise the visual effects bar this season as much as they have in the past. Hoey answers: "I don't know. We haven't seen the scripts yet!" ■

***Battlestar Galactica* airs on the Sci Fi Channel Fridays at 9 p.m. E.T./8 p.m. C.T. The mini-series and the first two seasons of the show are currently available on DVD from Universal Home Entertainment.**

**Barbara Robertson is an award-winning journalist who specializes in vfx and CG technologies.**





**Bejuba!**  
entertainment

phone: +44 7769 747 125  
sales@bejuba.com

**THE AMAZING ADRENALINI BROTHERS!**  
26 X 30 min  
78 X 7 min  
10 X 2 min  
as on ABC, YTV, ITV & Cartoon Network

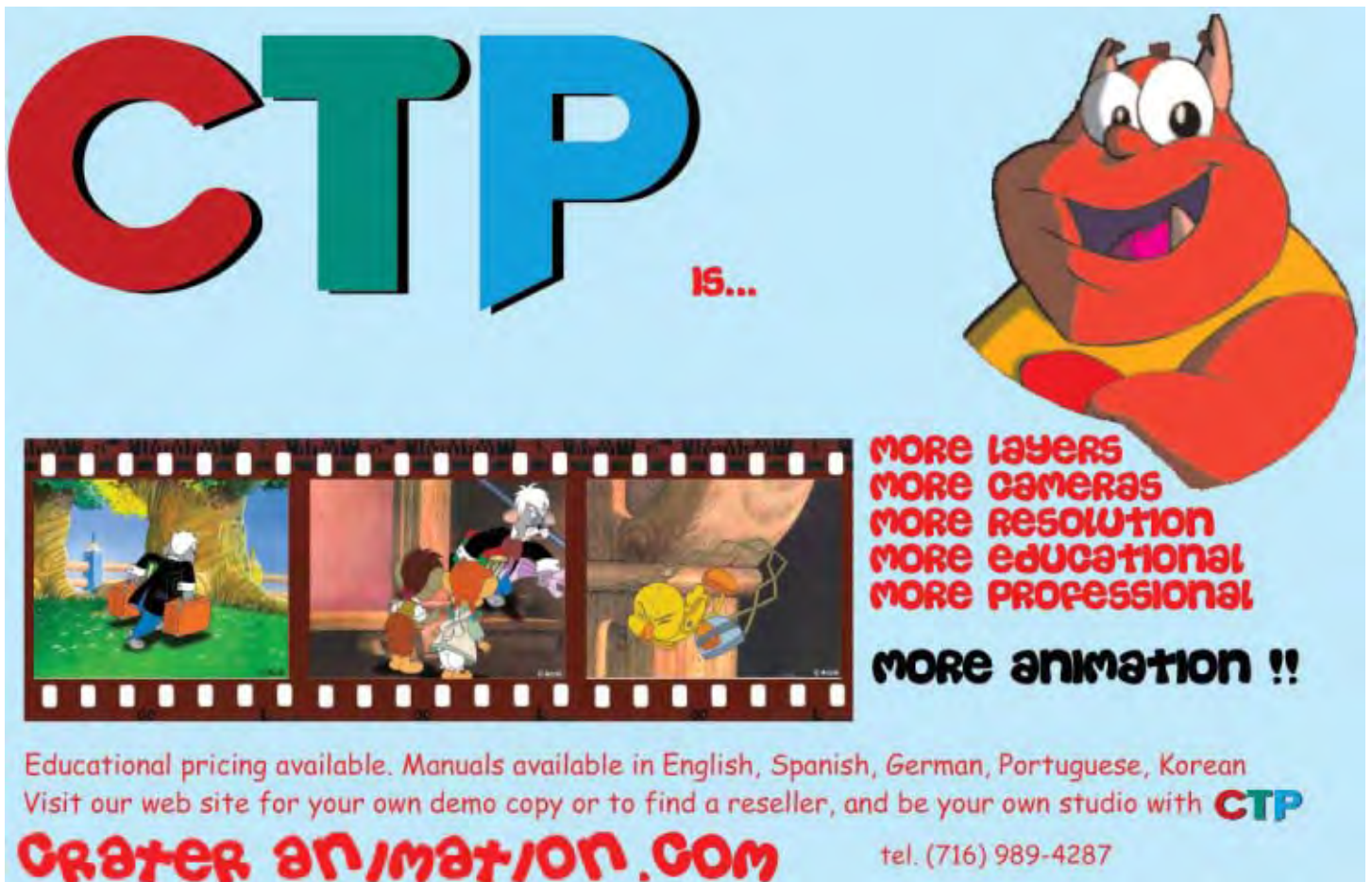
**Bonny Banana Mo**  
24 X 3 min  
as on CBBC

**LIKE A BALL**  
26 X 11 min  
as on CBBC

Come see us at stand 04.11


**CUT-OUT ANIMATION CO** **PeSKY** **4IDS** **AAP**

© 2004 Bejuba! Entertainment Ltd. All rights reserved. Bejuba! Entertainment Ltd. is a registered trademark of Bejuba! Entertainment Ltd. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners.



# CTP

IS...



**MORE LAYERS  
MORE CAMERAS  
MORE RESOLUTION  
MORE EDUCATIONAL  
MORE PROFESSIONAL**

**MORE animation !!**

Educational pricing available. Manuals available in English, Spanish, German, Portuguese, Korean  
Visit our web site for your own demo copy or to find a reseller, and be your own studio with **CTP**

**Grater animation.com** tel. (716) 989-4287





Image from Jason Donati's Student Film *Head Quarters*. Created at the Rochester Institute of Art – 1999. (MFA) Featured in SIGGRAPH's Animation Theater 1999



Jason Donati, chair of media arts & animation at the New England Institute of Art

Rhythm & Hues. Acme, a non-profit organization that operates with support from foundations, added Acme Online in 2005. ([www.acmeanimation.org](http://www.acmeanimation.org)) Master now directs Acme's curriculum full time and is pursuing prospects for expanding beyond the U.S.

The idea originally grew out of Master's own teaching experience in the late 1970s. He taught at Rowland High School—a good distance from Los Angeles—yet he persuaded animators like Chuck Jones, Bill Scott, Frank Thomas and Ollie Johnston to drive to his school and share their expertise. That was a lot to ask, and Master imagined, "If I got a videoconferencing system at my school, maybe they could get on *their* system at lunchtime and

*continued on page 74*

# This Acme Explodes in a Good Way!

Booming non-profit online program bridges the gap between students and animation pros. **by Ellen Wolff**

**W**ile E. Coyote fans know that mail-order packages marked ACME inevitably explode in the victim's face. But in the early 1990s, Warner Animation's Dave Master tempted fate by launching an animation mentoring program dubbed Acme. As director of artist development, Master realized, "Warner's spent lots of money visiting schools, looking at portfolios and sending rejection letters. Students and teachers *wanted* to do it right, but they didn't know what the studio wanted."

Master envisioned a videoconferencing system that would provide students with direct feedback from animation pros. Acme On Air began with eight schools and now reaches over 50, telecasting from studios like Pixar, PDI/DreamWorks, Disney, Sony and



Students working on a Camerawork Exercise. Students pictured are (from Left to Right) – Eric Phillips, Jon Straube (Bottom), Matt Hawkins



**ANIMATION  
AND VISUAL EFFECTS,  
ILLUSTRATION, GRAPHIC  
DESIGN, COMPUTER ARTS NEW  
MEDIA, FINE ART, PHOTOGRAPHY,  
ARCHITECTURE, ADVERTISING,  
INDUSTRIAL DESIGN, INTERIOR  
ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN, MOTION  
PICTURES & TELEVISION, FASHION**

*Image by Eva Kalmou, BFA, Homography*

The best time to **THINK** about education was years ago.  
*The second best time is right now.*

**IT'S NEVER TOO LATE**

REGISTER NOW FOR SPRING — CLASSES START JANUARY 29

1.800.544.ARTS / [ACADEMYART.EDU](http://ACADEMYART.EDU)



**ACADEMY of ART UNIVERSITY**

FOUNDED IN SAN FRANCISCO 1929 BY ARTISTS FOR ARTISTS

79 New Montgomery Street, San Francisco, CA 94105

Nationally accredited by ACICS, NASAD, Council for Interior Design Accreditation  
(formerly FIDER) (BFA-IAD), NAAB (M-ARCH)

**ONLINE DEGREES & CLASSES**



## Opportunities

continued from page 72

answer my kids' questions. I went to the studios and asked if they could do this. They said, 'No, but we love what you're doing and we'll keep coming out.' That got my wheels going."

When Master accepted the Warner's position in the '90s, his idea was finally realized. Acme On Air connected Hollywood animation talent with California college students in San Jose and Fullerton, as well as high schoolers in Alabama and Wyoming. "We telecast every other Tuesday— from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. on one Tuesday, and from 9 a.m. until 8 p.m. on the other." Animators like John Ramirez (*Hercules*, *Toy Story 2*) are regularly available, notes Master. "We try to provide sustained, legitimate contact with pros." Acme counts among its various mentors James Lopez (*The Lion King*, *Flushed Away*) Jennifer Cardon-Klein (*The Iron Giant*, *The Emperor's New Groove*) and Lennie Graves (*Beauty and the Beast*, *Charlotte's Web*). Acme

also has hosted veteran animators like Glen Keane and Don Hahn.

The proliferation of broadband in the last few years may have made it possible to take Acme online, but the decision, says Master, "Was more educational than technical. We were finding lots of super-poor schools that had no ability to get a T-1 line and get on air. But they did have computers, and they

lower. By critiquing each other's work, students earn points that help them move up a "learning ladder" from auditioner to intern to apprentice. Master explains, "We rely on a pay-it-forward system, where students earn their way toward getting comments from the pros."

As a result, the pros' attention is focused primarily on apprentice-level

"We couldn't have pros handling thousands of of beginners...we rely on a pay-it-forward system, where students earn their way towards getting comments from the pros."

— Dave Masters, founder of Acme Animation


kept saying, 'If you could just get this on the Internet ...'"

Being online, however, has upped the ante considerably, since nearly 10,000 students are now part of Acme. "We couldn't have pros handling thousands of beginners," Master observes. So Acme developed a mentorship "chain" in which students help others at the same level of knowledge—or

students who have amassed a portfolio. "Students can petition to have their body of work looked at to see if they're ready for the next level. That's up to the pros, just like it is at the studios."

Acme is also proving to be a path to college for high-schoolers, explains Master. "A high school kid can post pieces to our university review board,

SCHOOL OF: COMPUTER ANIMATION > DIGITAL ARTS & DESIGN > ENTERTAINMENT BUSINESS > FILM > GAME DEVELOPMENT > RECORDING ARTS > SHOW PRODUCTION & TOURING



**Full Sail**  
Real World Education

# COMPUTER ANIMATION

**fullsail.com**

**800.226.7625**

3300 University Boulevard Winter Park, FL 32792

Financial aid available to those who qualify.  
Career development assistance.  
Accredited College, ACCSCT.

Tim Naylor  
Full Sail Digital Media Graduate

Credits:  
Star Wars: Episode II - Attack of the Clones  
Star Wars: Episode III - Revenge of the Sith

and all the university animation teachers can say if it would be considered for entry into their programs. It goes into that kid's digital portfolio online, and that helps colleges recruit."

Because Acme receives foundation support, the cost per student for a supported school is only \$25 (\$100 for individuals signing onto the website). This has opened doors for students who otherwise might never get animation training. Master cites an independent evaluation of Acme's influence at Alabama's Carver High School, one of the poorest schools in that state. "Ninety-six percent of the Acme students went to college, and 45% went to art school or got art school scholarships."

As worthy as these results may be, Master stresses that Acme doesn't use its success to press the studios for

money. "Our schools sign contracts specifying they will not pester the studios." So many professional animators have volunteered to help Acme that Master tells them, "Don't allow us to be-

come a bother.' We don't want them to feel guilty. We're not a church."

The enduring idea behind Acme remains as true today as it was when Master was teaching three decades ago. "There's nothing better for animation students—and teachers—than having contact with pros. I designed Acme to do for them what Chuck Jones and others did for me." When he finally brought Jones onto Acme Online, recalls Master, "I said, 'Well, Chuck, here's an ACME that works!'" ■



**Drawn to Teaching:** Jason Donati discusses qualities of lighting using clips from Will Vinton's *The PJs* series in his Animation Studio course.

For more info, visit  
[www.acmeanimation.org](http://www.acmeanimation.org)

Ellen Wolff is a Los Angeles-based journalist who specializes in education and CG animation stories.

# GNOMON

## School of Visual Effects



1015 North Cahuenga Blvd  
Hollywood, CA 90038  
323.466.6663

*Industry-Approved, 21-Month Certificate Program in High-End Computer Graphics.*  
*Nine-Week Immersive Maya Fast Track Program.*  
*Instructors with Extensive Production Experience.*  
*Curriculum Geared Towards Techniques and Tools of The Digital Effects Industry.*  
*Classes in Fundamental Design, Production and Art Skills.*  
*Online Streaming-Video Tutorials on Maya.*  
*Training DVDs on Maya and Fundamental Skills.*





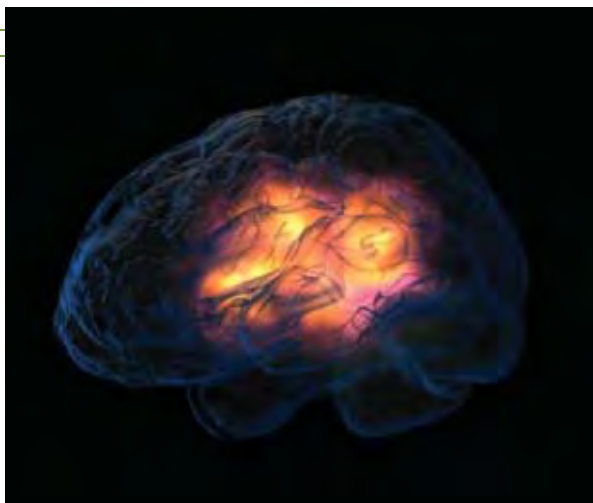





# 323.466.6663

[www.gnomon3d.com](http://www.gnomon3d.com)





# Meet the New Physician's Assistants

New York-based BioDigital Systems uses CG animation to create accurate medical simulations.

by Evelyn Jacobson

On a typical Friday Aaron Olikier is often in one of the operating rooms at New York University's medical school, standing alongside a surgeon observing intently as a knee replacement is started or as a heart surgery is completed. Olikier witnesses procedures performed by some of the country's most talented physicians as part of his research for creating some of the most anatomically accurate 3D medical simulations available.

"To be able to do the animations, you have to know the surgeries just as well as the doctor," says Olikier, technical director of 3D simulations and partner in BioDigital Systems, a New York City-based company that specializes in creating everything from 3D simulated surgical training tools to animations that show how drugs work to databases for cancer institutes. "You have to see it, and when you create it, it has to be right because [these animations are] what people will be using to train with."

Olikier began observing procedures while working on a training DVD that launched his career in 3D medical visualization. In 1999, he became involved with SmileTrain, a charitable organization that provides free cleft

palate surgeries to children who would otherwise not receive care. Working with Dr. Court Cutting, he developed an animated CD-ROM to show doctors in Third World countries how to perform the surgeries. He created Maya plug-ins to im-

port real data from Computed Tomography (CT) scans that allowed him to come up with an accurate surgical model for the CD-ROM, which is now considered one of the foremost training tools for the surgery.

Seven years later, Olikier is using his skills and combining his abilities with those of partners John Qualter, a medical animator who heads BioDigital Systems' animation division, and Frank Sculli, a biomedical engineer who leads the company's informatics department (who gathers and plugs the data into the programs), to create peer-reviewed products that are on the cutting edge of technology for a range of clients that include hospitals, pharmaceutical and medical device companies and medical schools.

To create their nonfiction 3D visualizations, Olikier, Qualter and their respective teams use the same tools as a Hollywood animator: After Effects and Combustion for compositing; Mental Ray for rendering and Photoshop for texturing. Maya is the

backbone for the firm's 3D anima-

accurate come from medical centers the company partners with, like Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center and St. Luke's Hospital's Image Reading Center. To create a stem cell animation that explains how using stem cells affects the brain for Stem Cell Therapeutics, a small Canadian biotech firm, the team used real data from Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) scans to create the animated brain.

The company's products take anywhere from two weeks to several months to create and can cost \$10,000 and up depending on the length of the project, and exactly what's involved. Often, for medical centers and teaching hospitals, the company works with mon-



Aaron Olikier



Frank Sculli



John Qualter



"The more people see these animations, the more they will see the value of 3D medical visualization and how it can be used to educate, plan surgeries or create new procedures."

—Aaron Olikier, partner and tech director of 3D simulations at BioDigital Systems

ey from grants used to develop these tools.

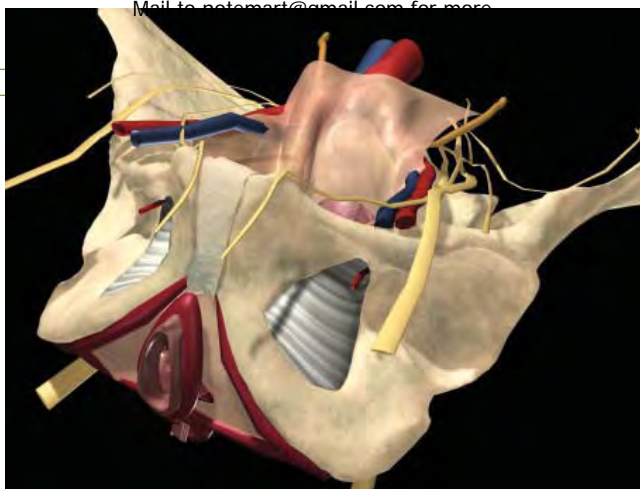
Qualter is currently working on a project with New York University School of Medicine called Web Initiative for Surgical Education (WISE-MD) where he is creating

tions, but they've created plug-ins specifically for medical animation, as well as proprietary technology and techniques that are used to import real-time data and accelerate processes. The datasets that allow their work to be anatomically

a library of medical animations used to give third-year medical students an overview of different surgical procedures. "We have video footage of surgeries, and we create animations of surgeries and sync the animations to the video," explains Qualter, who also often observes surgeries in order to animate them. "Students can log on the night before to see a particular procedure so everything is clear to them. [They're looking] at a bloodless field, it's colorful and we label the structures they're seeing, so when they look over the shoulder of a doctor, they're not so lost."

Originally created as a teaching tool for NYU, the project has gained national interest and educators are looking at ways to incorporate digital learning into curricula.

With consistently improving technology in such a nascent field, applications are constantly developing, even outside the scope of medicine and into related fields like law and criminal justice. Re-



cently BioDigital Systems helped the Boston Police Department digitally recreate the head of a murder victim. "That's a potential new market that's evolving," says Qualter. "This could be a whole new way of doing sketches for police departments around the world."

Long term, the company is part of what they call the race to develop the complete virtual patient—a digital human model where all systems work and can be manipulated to respond to different stimuli. BioDigital Systems has already developed a beating heart simulation where once data is imported can behave differ-

ently according to what's plugged—think of it as internal motion capture. It's been used in a simulation that shows cardiothoracic surgeons how a device for heart surgery works.

But for now the biggest challenge is educating their future clients—physicians, hospitals and other health care providers about what these 3D visualiza-

tions can do, especially in an industry that is slow to adapt to technology. "When people read something, it's an effective training tool, but to see something it's a much better learning device," says Olikar. "The more people see these animations, the more people will see the value of 3D medical visualization and how it can be used to educate, plan surgeries or create new procedures." ■

For more info, visit [www.biodigital-systems.com](http://www.biodigital-systems.com).

**Evelyn Jacobson is a Los Angeles-based journalist who specializes in entertainment.**

THE CENTER FOR DIGITAL IMAGING ARTS AT BOSTON UNIVERSITY

# create YOUR WORLD

## Certificate Programs

Digital Filmmaking	Visual Effects/Game Design
Photography	Graphic & Interactive Design
3D Animation	Recording Arts

Intensive nine-month programs for the skills and tools you need to turn your ideas into reality. Financial assistance and career services available. **APPLY NOW.**

CONTACT US TODAY

800.808.2342 or [www.cdiabu.com](http://www.cdiabu.com)

The Center for Digital Imaging Arts  
at Boston University

WWW.CDIABU.COM



YOU'RE  
A

# HACK!

WITH  
3-D PETE!

BY  
MIKE  
FISHER



**P**ETE HAS JUST ATTENDED A LOCAL SHOWING OF HIS LATEST ANIMATED SHORT, **SLOW MOTION FOOD FIGHT!**

THAT WAS GREAT, PETE!

THANKS!

WELL, THAT WENT WELL!

A-HEM!

HUH?... You!

YES, IT IS I, YOUR ARCH ENEMY, THE COOL CRITIC, AND I MUST TELL YOU SOMETHING!

COULD THIS BE IT?! IS THE COOL CRITIC FINALLY GOING TO SAY SOMETHING NICE ABOUT MY WORK?!

YES, GO ON!

I MUST ADMIT TO YOU...

...THAT YOUR WORK IS...

...GETTING MORE AND MORE...

...DISAPPOINTING WITH EACH FRAME YOU PRODUCE!  
**HA! HA! HA!**

WHAT?!

THAT'S RIGHT! THE WORK YOU'RE PRODUCING NOW ISN'T NEARLY AS SPONTANEOUS AND CREATIVE AS WHAT YOU WERE DOING 3 YEARS AGO!

BUT YOU HATE MY WORK FROM 3 YEARS AGO!

TRUE. YOUR WORK FROM THAT PERIOD IS STOMACH-CHURNING. BUT IT'S BETTER THAN THE DIGITAL SEWAGE YOU NOW PRODUCE!

**NOW PLAYING!**  
**SLOW MOTION FOOD FIGHT!**

BUT **SLOW MOTION FOOD FIGHT** IS MY FUNNIEST SHORT EVER!

FOOD! MOTION! IMPACT!

**FUNNY?!** IT'S FUNNY IN THE SAME WAY THE SOUND OF ESCAPING GAS IS FUNNY! YOUR LATEST SHORT IS NOTHING MORE THAN A LOUD ON-SCREEN **BURP!** WHAT HAPPENED TO WIT AND STYLE? YOU **SOLD OUT** FOR THE EASY LAUGH!

**SLOW MOTION FOOD FIGHT** IS EVEN MORE OF A SELLOUT THAN YOUR **LAST SHORT, FALL ON MY BUTTOCKS!** YOU, MY FRIEND, ARE A RAZOR'S EDGE AWAY FROM BECOMING A **HACK!**

{CHOKES} COULD COOL CRITIC BE TELLING THE **TRUTH**? HAVE I BEEN TAKING THE **LOW** ROAD WITH MY ANIMATIONS?!

OKAY, COOL CRITIC! YOU SUCCESSFULLY TORPEDOED MY SELF-ESTEEM WITH ASTONISHING ACCURACY! YOU WIN **THIS** ROUND! BUT YOU JUST WAIT! MY **NEXT** ANIMATION WILL KNOCK YOUR **BERET** OFF!



**W**ILL PETE EVER PLEASE THE COOL CRITIC? SHOULD HE EVEN TRY? **STAY TUNED!**

OPPORTUNITIES



Vancouver Institute of Media Arts

**VANarts**



Artwork by 3D Animation Student: Philip Obermayer



Artwork by Game Art & Design Student: Gordon Moran

*Bring Your Passion Live Your Dream*



*Celebrating 10 Years  
of Excellence in Animation Training*

VANarts welcomes Senior 3D Animation  
Advisors Andrew Gordon and Mike Venturini  
of Pixar Animation Studios to our faculty!

Intensive one-year Diploma Programs

2D/3D Animation

Game Art and Design

Visual Effects



[www.vanarts.com](http://www.vanarts.com)  
1-800-396-2787 [info@vanarts.com](mailto:info@vanarts.com)  
837 Beatty Street Vancouver, BC V6B 2M6



***They Don't Read Animation Magazine!***



Illustrations by Mercedes Milligan

***Aren't you glad you do?***



AND

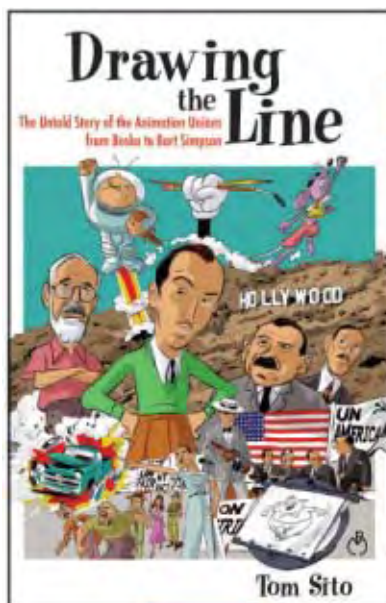
[WWW.ANIMATIONMAGAZINE.NET](http://WWW.ANIMATIONMAGAZINE.NET)

YOUR ONE-STOP DESTINATIONS FOR TIMELY ARTICLES, IN-DEPTH PROFILES  
AND ANIMATION-RELATED NEWS STORIES.

**DON'T LET THE TOON BUS PASS YOU BY!**

TO ORDER HOLIDAY GIFT SUBSCRIPTIONS, CALL 818-991-2884  
OR EMAIL [CIRC@ANIMATIONMAGAZINE.NET](mailto:CIRC@ANIMATIONMAGAZINE.NET)





Tom Sito

## DRAWING THE LINE

The Untold Story of the Animation Unions from Bosko to Bart Simpson

**Tom Sito**

"The first labor history of an industry whose principle figures—Walt Disney, Chuck Jones, and Max Fleischer—helped define American entertainment. . . . Sito describes the history and personalities behind the formation of the Screen Cartoonists Union, the strikes and walk-outs, the effects of Hollywood blacklisting, and the battles at the bargaining tables."  
—Turner Classic Movies

"One of the most extraordinary 'insider' books ever written about Hollywood and an essential contribution to the rising field of animation studies."—Paul Buhle

"Sito, by virtue of his unique position as one of the leading animators of the current generation, a student of world history and a former head of the Screen Cartoonists Union himself, is the perfect person to document this subject."—Jerry Beck

\$32.00 hardback; ISBN: 0-8131-2407-7

The University  
Press of

KENTUCKY

Available at bookstores • 800/839-6855 • [www.kentuckypress.com](http://www.kentuckypress.com)

## ANIMATION SUPPLIES

The Complete Source for  
All Your Animation Needs!

- Everything for the Professional & Amateur
- Wholesale Prices / Most Orders Shipped the Same Day

FAST, RELIABLE  
WORLDWIDE  
SERVICE

CARTOON



Featuring Our Own...

**CEL-VINYL PAINTS**

and Acrylic Animation Discs

LARGEST SELECTION OF ANIMATION  
BOND & ACETATE ANYWHERE!

©310/838-8467 • 800/523-3665 FAX 310/838-2531  
9024 Lindblade Street, Culver City, CA 90232

[www.cartooncolour.com](http://www.cartooncolour.com)



**Lightfoot Ltd, inc.**

Animation Supplies at a Discount!

[www.AnimationSupplies.com](http://www.AnimationSupplies.com)

School PO's Accepted  
Teacher Workshops

**PUNCHED ANIMATION PAPER \$9.95**

- Pencils
- Lightboxes
- Peg Bars
- Hole Punches
- Books
- Tables
- Discs
- Software
- Comic Paper
- Lesson Plans
- Field Guides
- Pencil Testers

951-693-5165

[www.LightfootLtd.com](http://www.LightfootLtd.com)

[www.AnimationSupplies.com](http://www.AnimationSupplies.com)



Animation Supplies at a Discount!

**CartoonSupplies.com**

INTERNATIONAL

**PUNCHED ANIMATION PAPER \$9.95**

- Pencils
- Lightboxes
- Peg Bars
- Hole Punches
- Books
- Tables
- Discs
- Software
- Comic Paper
- 3D Tapes
- Field Guides
- Pencil Testers

951-693-5086

[www.cartoonsupplies.com](http://www.cartoonsupplies.com)

## STUDENTS

**FACULTY**

Save on  
Thousands  
of Popular  
Software  
Titles!!

Save up to  
**85%**

- Adobe
- AliasWavefront
- Autodesk
- Avid
- Corel
- Macromedia
- NewTek
- Softimage
- Much More!!



FREE CATALOG AVAILABLE!

[www.JourneyEd.com](http://www.JourneyEd.com)

800-874-9001

**JourneyEd**  
Education Marketing

Offer for U.S. & Canadian qualified students & faculty only.  
Proof of academic status required with order.





University of the  
West of England  
**BRISTOL**



**Aardman**

**Have you got what it takes to study in Europe's most animated city?**

The Bristol School of Animation at the University of the West of England, Bristol, has signed a unique agreement with Oscar® winners Aardman Animations Ltd to create unparalleled opportunities for talented animators from around the world to study in Bristol.

[www.uwe.ac.uk/amd/bristolanimation](http://www.uwe.ac.uk/amd/bristolanimation)

Bristol School of Animation, University of the West of England,  
Bower Ashton Campus, Kennel Lodge Road, Bristol, UK, BS2 2JT  
Tel: 444 (0)117 32 84810 - email: [amd.shortcourses@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:amd.shortcourses@uwe.ac.uk)




*Start here, go anywhere*

Animation in real time...  
*real fast... real simple... real sharp!*




**No mouse. No computer. No hassles. Introducing the new LunchBox DV.**

The LunchBox DV offers a wealth of *new* features with it's simple to use, instant feedback for animators in a compact box.

The LunchBox DV, simply nourishing your creativity.

- Input from DV or analog cameras
- Twice the resolution
- Transfer of DV to/from your firewire enabled computer
- Improved audio fidelity
- Capacity of over 120 minutes

[www.animationtoolworks.com](http://www.animationtoolworks.com)

North America: 1.877.625.6438  
Facsimile: 1.503.925.0221  
Japan: MediaLink 81.471.86.1061  
Korea: 82.2.573.8418  
Elsewhere: 1.503.625.6438





# MASTER DESIGNER

**NYU Master's in Digital Imaging and Design**

Take your place at the forefront of digital imaging and animation. With artistic and creative insights from instructors at the top of the industry, you'll learn the critical process of managing the multi-faceted animation process in a team environment. Join a professional network that will open doors, whether it's Hollywood, an East Coast boutique, or any of the new, emerging opportunities in the field. Visit our website to view a gallery of student artwork.



School of Continuing and Professional Studies

**Information Session:**  
**Wednesday, Nov. 8, 6-8 p.m.**  
 NYU Midtown Center, 10th Fl.  
 11 West 42nd Street  
 (between 5th and 6th Avenues)  
 Please call to RSVP.

[www.scps.nyu.edu/422](http://www.scps.nyu.edu/422)  
 1-888-998-7204, ext.422

That's why I go to NYU.

New York University is an affirmative action/equal opportunity institution. ©2006 New York University School of Continuing and Professional Studies



Event	Date	Place	Website
"A Month of Horror" Festival, Two Boots Pioneer Theater	Oct. 1-31	New York, NY	<a href="http://www.twoboosts.com">www.twoboosts.com</a>
LALIFF, Los Angeles Latino Int'l Film Festival	Oct. 5-15	Los Angeles, CA	<a href="http://www.latinofilm.org">www.latinofilm.org</a>
5th Annual Heard Museum Film Festival	Oct. 12-15	Tempe, AZ	<a href="http://www.heard.org">www.heard.org</a>
DOCUSUR Int'l Southern Documentary Film Festival	Oct. 22-29	Guía de Isora, Spain	<a href="http://www.docusur.es">www.docusur.es</a>
Digital Hollywood	Oct. 23-26	Santa Monica, CA	<a href="http://www.digitalhollywood.com">www.digitalhollywood.com</a>
Fantasy Worldwide Int'l Film Festival	Oct. 27-29	Toronto, ON, Canada	<a href="http://www.fwifft.com">www.fwifft.com</a>
Annual Savannah Film and Video Festival	Oct. 28-Nov. 4	Savannah, GA	<a href="http://www.scad.edu/filmfest">www.scad.edu/filmfest</a>
AFI Los Angeles Int'l Film Festival	Nov. 2-12	Los Angeles, CA	<a href="http://www.afi.com">www.afi.com</a>
Dejima Japanese Film Festival	Nov. 3-5	Amsterdam, Netherlands	<a href="http://www.dejimafilmfestival">www.dejimafilmfestival</a>
Holland Animation Festival	Nov. 5	Utrecht, Netherlands	<a href="http://www.haff.nl">www.haff.nl</a>
Magma Short Film Festival	Nov. 8-11	Rotorua, New Zealand	<a href="http://www.magmafilm.org.nz">www.magmafilm.org.nz</a>
New York Int'l Independent Film & Video Festival	Nov. 9-16	New York, NY	<a href="http://www.nyfilmvideo.com">www.nyfilmvideo.com</a>
Hollywood Reporter/Billboard Film & TV Music Conference	Nov. 14-15	Beverly Hills, CA	<a href="http://www.BillboardEvents.com">www.BillboardEvents.com</a>
Oslo Int'l Film Festival	Nov. 16-26	Oslo, Norway	<a href="http://www.oslofilmfestival.com">www.oslofilmfestival.com</a>
Stockholm Film Festival	Nov. 16-26	Stockholm, Germany	<a href="http://www.filmfestivalen.se/sitelliteroot/index">www.filmfestivalen.se/sitelliteroot/index</a>
Chicago Int'l Toy and Game Fair (CHITAG)	Nov. 17-19	Chicago, IL	<a href="http://www.chitag.com">www.chitag.com</a>
Badalona Int'l Short Film Festival	Nov. 17-25	Badalona, Spain	<a href="http://www.badalonacom.com">www.badalonacom.com</a>
Brief Encounters Int'l Short Film Festival	Nov. 21-26	Bristol, U.K.	<a href="http://www.brief-encounters.org.uk">www.brief-encounters.org.uk</a>
Graphite 2006	Nov. 29-Dec. 2	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	<a href="http://www.cs.otago.ac.nz/graphite">www.cs.otago.ac.nz/graphite</a>
Digital Hollywood Europe	Nov. 29-Dec. 1	London, U.K.	<a href="http://www.digitalhollywood.com">www.digitalhollywood.com</a>



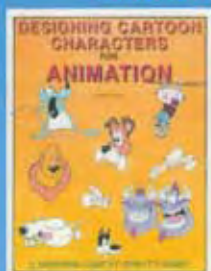
### Animation Instruction Books

These books and DVD's are full of information that will assist you with your animation studies.

"Truly the best information found anywhere. These are MUST HAVE books"

Natasha Lightfoot  
[www.lightfootitd.com](http://www.lightfootitd.com)

visit our website for lots more info  
[www.brianlemay.com](http://www.brianlemay.com)



## In the Next Issue of **ANIMATION MAGAZINE**



★ **Marching with the Penguins of Warner Bros' *Happy Feet***

★ **The Digital Crimes of *Casino Royale***

★ ***Class of 3000*: Cartoon Network's Musical Experiment**

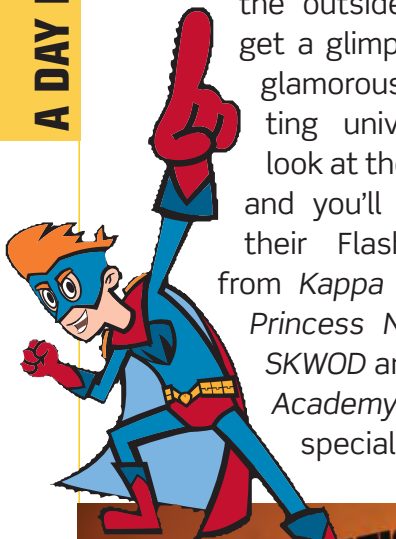
★ **Multi-Platforming Myths Debunked**

# Advertisers in Alphabetical Order

g Story		JourneyEd.com	
<a href="http://www.gstory.com">www.gstory.com</a>	21	<a href="http://www.journeyed.com">www.journeyed.com</a>	82
Academy of Art University		Licensing in Latin America	w
<a href="http://www.academyart.edu">www.academyart.edu</a>	73	<a href="http://www.licensingbrands.com">www.licensingbrands.com</a>	67
Animation Toolworks		Lightfoot	
<a href="http://www.animationtoolworks.com">www.animationtoolworks.com</a>	81	<a href="http://www.lightfootltd.com">www.lightfootltd.com</a>	79
Anima Vitae Ltd		MarVista	
<a href="http://www.anima.fi">www.anima.fi</a>	1	<a href="http://www.marvista.net">www.marvista.net</a>	9,11,13
Animated Cartoon Factory		M.B.M. Alcuni	
<a href="http://www.brianlemay.com">www.brianlemay.com</a>	79	<a href="http://www.alcuni.it">www.alcuni.it</a>	3
Annecy		MPSC	
<a href="http://www.annecy.org">www.annecy.org</a>	65	<a href="http://www.mpsc839.org/mpsc839">www.mpsc839.org/mpsc839</a>	Inside Back Cover
Asia Media Festival		NATPE	
<a href="http://www.asiamediafestival.com">www.asiamediafestival.com</a>	61	<a href="http://www.natpe.org">www.natpe.org</a>	69
BCI		New York University	
<a href="http://www.bcieclipse.com">www.bcieclipse.com</a>	51	<a href="http://www.scps.nyu.edu/x65">www.scps.nyu.edu/x65</a>	79
Bejuba!		Pixtrend	
<a href="http://www.bejuba.com/Bejuba_homepage.htm">www.bejuba.com/Bejuba_homepage.htm</a>	45	<a href="http://www.pixtrend.com">www.pixtrend.com</a>	39
Bristol School of Animation		Project10g	
<a href="http://www.uwe.ac.uk">www.uwe.ac.uk</a>	81	<a href="http://www.chicaloca.com">www.chicaloca.com</a>	49
Cartoon Colour		SamG	
<a href="http://www.cartooncolour.com">www.cartooncolour.com</a>	79	<a href="http://www.samg.net">www.samg.net</a>	53
Cartoon One		Teletoon	
<a href="http://www.cartoonone.it">www.cartoonone.it</a>	4	<a href="http://www.teletoon.com">www.teletoon.com</a>	31
CartoonSupplies		TMS Entertainment	
<a href="http://www.cartoonsupplies.com">www.cartoonsupplies.com</a>	79	<a href="http://www.tms-e.com">www.tms-e.com</a>	41
Center for Digital Imaging Arts at Boston University		ToonBoom	
<a href="http://www.digitalimagingarts.com">www.digitalimagingarts.com</a>	77	<a href="http://www.toonboom.com">www.toonboom.com</a>	37
CLKO		TV France	
<a href="http://www.clko.com">www.clko.com</a>	59	<a href="http://www.tvfrance-intl.com">www.tvfrance-intl.com</a>	33
DIC		University Press of Kentucky	
<a href="http://www.dicent.com">www.dicent.com</a>	7	<a href="http://www.kentucypress.com">www.kentucypress.com</a>	80
DQ Entertainment Limited		University of the Arts	
<a href="http://www.dqentertainment.com">www.dqentertainment.com</a>	63	<a href="http://www.uarts.edu">www.uarts.edu</a>	68
EM.Entertainment		USC - School of Cinema TV, Division of Animation & Digital Arts	
<a href="http://www.em.tv">www.em.tv</a>	2	<a href="http://www.usc.edu">www.usc.edu</a>	73
Full Sail		Van Arts	
<a href="http://www.fullsail.com">www.fullsail.com</a>	74	<a href="http://www.vanarts.com">www.vanarts.com</a>	79
Gnomon		Warner Bros International TV	
<a href="http://www.gnomonschool.com">www.gnomonschool.com</a>	75	<a href="http://www.warnerbros.com">www.warnerbros.com</a>	Back Cover
Iconix			
<a href="http://www.iconix.co.kr">www.iconix.co.kr</a>	35		



It's not every day that **Larry Schwarz** and his team at New York-based indie studio **Animation Collective** allow the outside world to get a glimpse of their glamorous jet-setting universe. One look at these photos and you'll know why their Flash shows—from *Kappa Mikey* and *Princess Natasha* to *SKWOD* and *Kung Fu Academy*—are very special indeed.



All of our original series are written by in-house writers. Writers' room is a riot!



Hi. I'm Larry Schwarz, the CEO of Animation Collective. I'm the natural blonde.



Did you watch last night's *Kung Fu academy*? Tanner is sooo dreamy!



It's all about the kids.



I meet with Chris and Sean, two of our executive producers. Chris is the more outgoing, but Sean is the better athlete.



Sticking to the production schedule is really important, too.



While the animators are busy animating, I like to start my day with a thousand crunches. Orange is my favorite color.



# FIGHT *for* YOUR RIGHTS!

## AUTHORIZATION I. A. T. S. E. & M. P. M. O.\*

I, \_\_\_\_\_, (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please print your name) (Your home telephone)

of \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please print your home address, city, zip)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Please print your job classification [attendant, layout, etc.]) (Your Social Security number)

authorize IATSE & MPMO\* to represent me in collective bargaining and to negotiate and conclude all agreements with my employer, \_\_\_\_\_

(Name of your employer)  
regarding the terms and conditions of my employment. If the union obtains an agreement with my employer, I understand that I am free to negotiate more desirable terms on an individual basis. I understand that when the majority of employees authorize union representation, recognition from my employer may be obtained without an election.

X \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please sign here) (Today's date)

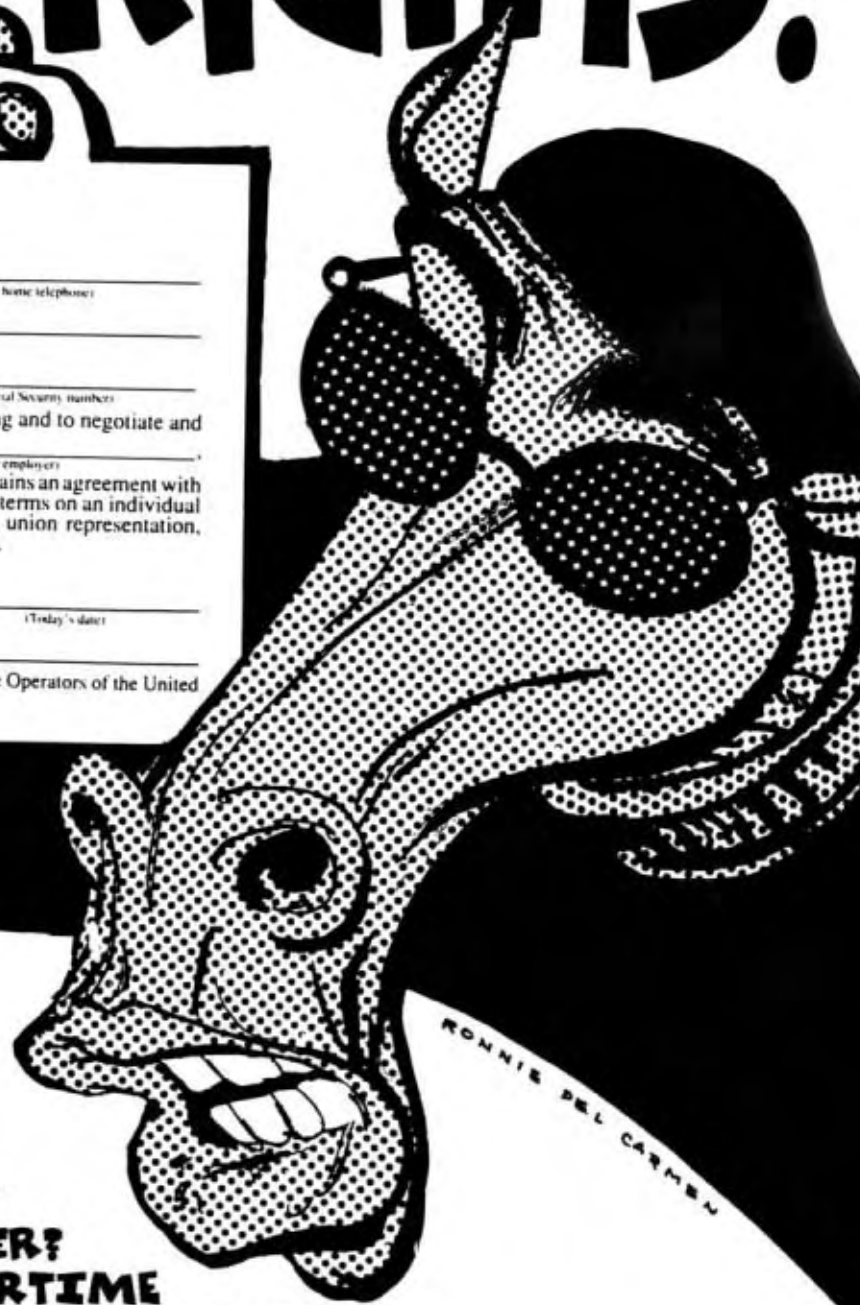
Received by: \_\_\_\_\_

\*International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees and Moving Machine Operators of the United States and Canada, AFL-CIO

## With This!

**ARE YOU SICK AND  
TIRED OF BEING ABUSED BY  
YOUR NON-UNION EMPLOYER?  
FED UP WITH WORKING OVERTIME  
WITHOUT PAY? THE MEANS TO SAVE YOUR  
CAREER IS ON THIS PAGE. FILL OUT THE  
ABOVE CARD AND MAIL IT TO: M.P.S.C. LOCAL  
839, 4729 LANKERSHIM BLVD., NORTH HOLLYWOOD,  
CA 91602. IT'S YOUR FUTURE!**

CHECK OUT OUR NEW WEBSITE AT <http://www.mpsc839.org/mpsc839>





# LEGION of SUPERHEROES



**WARNER BROS. INTERNATIONAL TELEVISION**

"LEGION OF SUPERHEROES" © WARNER BROS. ENTERTAINMENT INC. "LEGION OF SUPERHEROES" AND ALL RELATED CHARACTERS AND ELEMENTS ARE TRADEMARKS OF AND © DC COMICS. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.